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LETTERS AND POEMS,

BY THE LATE

Mr. JOHN HENDERSON.

WITH

ANECDOTES OF HIS LIFE,

BY

JOHN IRELAND.

——— *If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb 'ere  
he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings,  
and the widow weeps.*

SHAKSPEARE.

L O N D O N :

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## P R E F A C E.

**O**UR Second Charles, of pleasant and good-natured memory, observing Gregorio Leti, the Italian historian, attending his levee, asked him how his book went on; for, said the King, “I am informed you intend publishing Anecdotes of the English Court. Take care there be no offence in it.” “Sire,” answered the Italian, “I am collecting materials for such a work,

From Mr. Henderson's letters, I have endeavoured to select such as tend to explain his theatrical story, or such as from their *naïveté*, pleasantry, and good sense, place his powers in a light, which, I think, gives them a distinguished rank in that class of writing. It is scarce necessary to premise, that they were not intended for the press, and therefore exhibit, *not* the writer and his labours, but the *man* in his natural character.

I am apprehensive it may be thought that some of them are unimportant, and relate to private transactions, with which the public have no concern, and that I might have compressed the volume, by omitting the introductions and conclusions of those to myself,

self, which frequently contain merely a repetition of the same professions of friendship, only expressed in different words ; but I think, that originality of turn which he frequently gives to the most trifling circumstance, such a mark of his mind, as ought not to be withheld by him who professes to publish his letters ; and I am inclined to look upon that editor who lops off, at his own discretion, any branches with which he happens to be dissatisfied, as sometimes doing more than his duty warrants.

There are some miscellaneous epistles written at a very early period of his life : the few which I have inserted that were addressed to him, need not any apology for their publication.

## x P R E F A C E.

The poems which are subjoined, considered as hasty effusions rather than finished compositions, as the productions of a man who had received few aids from education,\* and whose only guides were a classical taste, formed by having read, with  
a power

\* It is not intended to insinuate this as an apology. I thought they had merit, or I would not have published them. Nothing can be more contemptible than pester-  
ing the public with reams of nonsense, by young gentlemen under fourteen years of age, black women, men-  
mercers, ostlers who cannot spell; and esquires, who can do little more.

If a work has merit enough for the public eye, that public will generally protect and encourage it; and if it has not, its being written while the author was standing upon one leg, or standing upon his head; written with  
his



a power of discrimination, some of the best English writers, prove that he possessed imagination, and aptitude of poetical expression, which might, had he made poetry the object of his pursuit, have been cultivated into excellence.

Attached to his previous reputation, they may excite curiosity, and, I hope, gratify it, by exhibiting his talents in a new point of view.

The high estimation in which his abilities were held by men of distinguished rank in literature, the ample testimony which  
 was

his fingers, or written with his toes; written in seven days, or seven months, are very insufficient reasons to give for its appearance, in an age when the press teems with hourly births, of which we only know, that "*they were born, and died.*"

was given to his merit as an actor, and the eminent honours which were paid to his memory as a man, first suggested the idea of publishing his letters and poems. I reviewed what had my early approbation, and time has not much sunk them in my opinion.

It has been suggested to me, that my notes are too numerous, and too long, but I could not well abridge, or incorporate them with the work. 'Tis the error of inexperience ; for this is the first book I ever ventured before the awful tribunal of the public. If I have pardon from my readers, and should ever publish another, that fault shall be avoided.

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# A N E C D O T E S

O F

Mr. JOHN HENDERSON.

A CLAIM of literary honours, for men who have not received a scholastic education, is, I am conscious, liable to be contested.\* The avenues to that portal of the Temple of fame, are guarded by the giants of learning, who, mounted upon pedestals, composed of huge tomes  
B of

\* It seems a general axiom, that he who has never felt *birch*, should never wear *bays*.

He had no claim to hereditary honours, nor title to any paternal inheritance. † He was the builder of his own fame, and the founder of his own fortune, for had not his talents brought him into celebrity, and given him the power of acquiring independence, it is not probable that any one would have enquired who was his grandfather.

permitted me to enhance the value of this volume by the publication of one of his letters, pointed out the course of his studies, and gave him some assistance in an attempt to attain that language; but Henderson's mind was too volatile for the *gradus ad Parnassum*.

† It has been said he was descended from Doctor Alexander Henderson, of Fordyll; for this there is no authority, except the name being spelt in the same manner. He believed his family were originally Irish, but whether they were or not, he neither knew nor cared. He thought, with Sir Thomas Overbury, that the man who has nothing to boast of but his illustrious ancestry, is somewhat like a potatoe, the only good thing is under ground.

father. Of his grandfather, however, those who wish it may read in the Memoirs of an unfortunate young Nobleman, by which Memoirs, and some collateral evidence, it appears that he was a Quaker, and a warm adherent to the cause of Mr. Annesley. That in conjunction with several others, he adventured a considerable sum in support of the Anglesey lawsuit, which being lost, the money advanced was never recovered by himself or Henderson's father, who was an Irish factor in Goldsmith-street, Cheapside, where Mr. John Henderson was born in February 1746-7.

By his father's death in 1748, his mother was left with a very slender pittance, and two sons totally dependent upon her. She retired to Newport Pagnell, where a close attention to œconomy enabled her to

support herself and family upon the interest of less than a thousand pounds. \*

In this place, with no other tutor than his mother, Henderson passed the early part of his life. She taught him to read, pointed out the proper authors, and induced him to imprint upon his memory, and recite, select passages from Shakespeare, Pope, Addison, or any other English classic in her possession.

The

\* The eldest son she apprenticed to a Mr. Clee, an ingenious engraver, in Oxendon-street, and the young man gave early promise of great professional talents; but being of a very delicate habit, fell into a decline, and was removed to Paddington, where happening to lodge in the same house with the afterwards celebrated Kitty Fisher, and being suddenly seized with a violent fit of coughing, the good-natured girl ran to his assistance, and he died in her arms.

The wonder-working magic of the old bard enchanted his imagination, \* opened a new creation to his fancy, and prompted him to enquire how those characters were represented which afforded him so much delight in the perusal. The description promoted a most eager wish to see a play, a wish which could not then be gratified, for in Newport-Pagnell there were no players.

Learning and reciting the speeches improved a memory naturally tenacious, and gave him an early relish for polite literature.

B 4

By

\* The first play which attracted and delighted him, was, *The Winter's Tale*, and he often declared it was fortunate for him, the commentators had not been about his mother's edition. It was without notes ; which, said he, confuse, perplex, and embarrass me *now*. God help me, what would they have done *then*? I suppose they would have crazed *me*, as they have other people.

By this was his taste formed, and as the writer of these anecdotes has frequently heard him declare, by this he acquired what knowledge he had of the English language, for of the rules of grammar he was totally ignorant. \*

It would be defrauding his memory of a debt due from justice, should I omit to remark that he not only always spoke of his mother's attentions with filial gratitude, but when his situation enabled him to follow the impulse of his mind, made her happiness his first care.† She lived to see her instructions matured by time, and the public

\* I think it is said, that Cowley's school-master could never prevail upon him to learn the rules of grammar; yet, from the prose-writings of Cowley, who that has read them will withhold praise.

† This will appear by several letters in this volume.



public distinguish and protect what she had planted and fostered.

At about eleven years of age he went to a school at Hemel-Hemstead, taught by the late Doctor Stirling, where he did not remain above twelve months, but short as the period was, contrived to enlarge his acquaintance with the English classics, to acquire some knowledge of French, and learn the common rules of Arithmetic.

From this place he returned to London, and having shewn an early propensity to drawing, was placed as a kind of house pupil to the late Mr. Fournier, who was then a Drawing-Master, a man possessed of great versatility of talent, but destitute of that prudence which might have rendered his abilities useful to himself or family.\*

\* Fournier's conduct, or rather want of conduct, seems to have been very similar to what the Duke of Buckingham's

From a person of this description it is not to be supposed young Henderson could obtain

Buckingham's would probably have been, had his Grace ranked with plebeians. Fournier was,

“ In the course of one revolving moon,

“ Engraver, painter, fidler, and buffoon.”

His grand ambition was being able to do what any other man could, and having a happy facility, in the course of a few years he distinguished himself as an engraver, painter, musician, carver, modeller in wax, and teacher of drawing and perspective, with which he was so well acquainted as to compose a book on the subject, upon the principle of Doctor Brooke Taylor, which has considerable merit. In the first edition, is an etching from an early design of Mr. Gainborough's, which Henderson told me was etched by himself, without any assistance from his master.

If we try Fournier by Mr. Boswell's definition of man, he will be found to have had some merit. He was

obtain many advantages. He was indeed very ill used. Part of his employment

was

was a "*cooking animal*†;" he dreft and fold alamode beef; and I am told, that the truffles and morrels which he used in making up this composition, led him to the study of natural history. At one period of his life he kept a chandler's shop, and could metamorphose a sprat into an anchovy, substitute dried willow leaves for tea, and mix fine sand with his Lisbon sugar; he was a good carver, a tolerable button-maker, and, I was near saying, not a contemptible buffoon; but with the utmost submission to those ingenious gentlemen, who excel in imitating the noise a horse makes when he is drinking, the purring of a cat, braying of an ass, croaking of a raven, or lowing of a cow; such qualifications would have entitled him to no higher a class than, *an imitating animal*,

† The beasts, have memory, judgement, and all the faculties and passions of our mind, in a certain degree; but no beast is a cook.

was to drive his master in a one horse chaise to some academies where he taught, in the neighbourhood of London, and to feed and rub down the horse, on his return to town,

During his stay with Fournier he made a pen and ink drawing from a print of a fisherman smoking his pipe, with sundry accompaniments

*animal*, rather more cunning than a monkey, and rather more active than an oyster ; but Fournier would bear the test of Dr. Franklin's definition. He was a *tool-making animal*† ; he made gravers, and modelling instruments.

When we consider the number of professions he attempted, can we wonder that he did not attain very great excellence in any ?

† No animal but man makes a thing, by means of which he can make another thing.

accompaniments in the stile of Teniers. This, as the production of a boy under fourteen years of age, obtained him the honour of the second premium from the society for the encouragement of arts, and the stile in which it was executed shews an accuracy of eye, and power of imitation, very rarely the lot of one so young.

As this boyish production was higher in my estimation than his own, in the infancy of our friendship he gave it me, but as it was the only specimen of his drawing, I presented it to Mrs. Henderson on her marriage, and am informed it is now in the collection of Sir John Elliot.

Soon after this time he came to live with Mr. Cripps, a working silversmith in St. James's-street, to whom his mother was related, and her intention was that he should

should learn that trade, but the death of Mr. Cripps put an end to this scheme, and he was left at about twenty years of age with very few connections, and without any determinate pursuit.

His only resource seemed to be that of becoming an assistant in a silversmith's shop, but even this situation, humble as it may seem, was not very easy to obtain ; for, on application to a person of the trade, the highest terms offered were twenty-five pounds a year. A proposal was soon after made him to become out-door clerk to a banker, upon a salary little better than the foregoing. Both these offers he communicated to a friend, who warmly opposed his accepting terms so very inferior to what his abilities ought to command, and advised him to turn his attention to the stage, for which he thought him eminently qualified ; but Hen-

derson

derfon hesitated at this advice, declaring his circumstance did not enable him to wait the tedious delays of managers. Being, however, assured, that he might consider the house, interest, and purse of his friend, at his service, until he was situated to his own satisfaction, he directed his endeavours to an introduction amongst the *Dramatis Personæ* ; endeavours in which he encountered difficulties, delays, and mortifications, which cannot be conceived by those who have not been in similar situations ; which would have abated the vigour of pursuit, and cooled the ardour of expectation in almost any other man ; but he seems to have possessed, even at that time, a consciousness of talents that when seen, would force themselves into notice, and when noticed must be encouraged.

He

He however passed his time easily and cheerfully, in the society of a family where he was treated with all the attention that friendship could prompt, by whom his interest was considered as connected with their own, who sincerely esteemed him, were pleased with his talents, and gratified by his pleasantries; and perhaps it would not have been easy to point out a man who possessed such convivial powers as he did in the younger part of his life. His observation was quick, his comprehension ample, his manners most lively and conciliating; but the ludicrous light in which he saw and frequently exhibited any object that presented itself, created him enemies, who, though they were pleased with his wit had no great relish for his satire, when exercised upon themselves\*.

\* A city dealer in little trinkets, whose ever smiling face bears some resemblance to Lord Monboddo's



The Ode to the memory of Shakespeare being at this time popular, Henderfon attempted

*Aborigine*, became ambitious of being enrolled an artist in an exhibition catalogue, made a copy of the Duke of Leinster's arms in *human hair*, and brought it for Mr. Henderfon's approbation, telling him he wished a *pat* inscription written under, that it might be noticed in the exhibition room. "Sir, (says Henderfon) I will give you one, that had you known and considered the advice of the Delphic oracle, you would have chosen for yourself: it shall be allusive." "Thank you, Sir," says the other.—"You observe, (continued Henderfon) the supporters are two monkies rampant, proper, and very pretty they are indeed; lend me a pen, Sir, and I will write you an inscription from the great Milton. Here it is: read it aloud, Sir."

———— " *In their looks divine,*

" *The image of their glorious Maker shone.*"

Happening to see a manuscript, which one of his friends was preparing for the press, entitled, "Original

tempted it in Mr. Garrick's manner, and with such success, that it must have been a very accurate ear which could distinguish one speaker from the other\*.

Some of the consequences which resulted from this talent, he describes in the following letter to a young divine :

"Tales for the Instruction of Young Gentlemen\* and Ladies," he inscribed in the title page the following quotation :

" T A L E S !

" *Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,*

" *Signifying nothing.*"

The book was not published.

\* His first public exhibition was in a barn, or some such place, at the polite village of Islington, where he recited the Ode for the benefit of a few unfortunates, who called themselves a company of comedians.

One of the audience, who had retired from the plains of Devonshire to breathe the pure air of Islington, in his  
later

London, 1<sup>st</sup> Jan. 1770.

To the Reverend MR. P——.

I Find T—— has written to you. I suppose you will correspond with him. He sent me his farce with a message, begging me to offer it to Dibden, which I have declined, as thinking it more proper to present it either to Garrick or Colman. I wish it may answer his expectations. Does not a wish sometimes imply a doubt. ——  
\* \* \* \* \* and I sat in judgement upon it the other night, and brought in our verdict—*Ignoramus*.

I am glad you told me of the thirty manuscript sermons, I should ~~else~~ have rose

C 2

early,

later years, declared he was certain, the speaker *must be*, either Mr. Garrick, or Antichrist,

early, and late took rest, to translate Flechier's and Bourdalou's for you. L—— thinks you are dead; for asking me how you did, I replied, you slept with your fathers, I made him happy by telling him it was a metaphorical sleep, and that you would awake a profound theologian.

It was a very rash proposal I made to you of commenting upon authors. I thought it might have been done, but when I go about it I feel myself strangely confined in my powers, like those who do not apprehend the danger of a precipice till they are on the brink. I think I will give up the thought 'till you are more at leisure. R—— I seldom see. L—— never. Those hours I am not with I—— are passed in [ drinking, and writing serious reflections on, and bitter invectives against, drunkenness, both in verse and prose. If this contra-

[riety

riety continues, and heaven only knows how long it may continue, you may expect a satire against fornication written from Marjoram's.—Is not this in your language the character of one *buffeted by Satan*? B——, in the simplicity of his heart told me, one day, after much bewailing the reduction of his circumstances, “ that it was a great mercy he had not *taken* to drinking,” feeling himself, I suppose, totally unable to resist any impulse which it should please Lucifer to embarrass him with. I saw your letter to E——, wherein I stand recorded as a fool for quoting Macbeth upon such a subject as your laziness—and this is owing to my modesty, that would rather talk in other people's words than my own.

But

“ Hence ye vain fears of criticism, hence,  
By caution nurs'd, at happiness' expence ;

To prove my pen in trite quotations run,  
 Thine own the quibble, and thine own the pun;  
 Take thine full swing, and in the critic's spite,  
 If nonsense urge thee, freely nonsense write."

I will make you repent the reproof, for talk I must—and if it is all my own. But you have brought it upon yourself, and so are less to be pitied. E—— writes with me. His will be a good letter, and I am glad I have found the way of diverting your indignation. He will put you into spirits, and you will read mine with better temper.

I wish we could form a triumvirate at T——'s; he has written me a very genteel and pressing invitation. I have traces upon my memory of much happiness with him, and it was a happiness that I like, independent of auxiliary hogheads. There is a natural festivity in him that will always entertain,

entertain, and I have known him start much excellent wit and good-natured satire. I believe matrimony draws off a man's genius; his letters to me are not near so pleasant, nor so brilliant as they were wont to be. I suppose you will rebuke me for that metaphor, and therefore you may erase *genius*, and insert *attention*, which is the same thing with those like you, with whom desire is power.

There is a burlesque parody of Garrick's Ode published, on Le Stue, cook to the Duke of Newcastle, and testimonies to his genius and merit prefixed.

I wish Garrick's had been still at the bottom of Avon, from whence I am sure he fished up some of it; for it has ruined my constitution in speaking it. I have been up till three in the morning, four nights a

week, for this month past. Instead of sleep, I get flattery ; and instead of dreaming of Miss ———, claret.

I wish I could convey to you a few sounds which the boobies about me say are exceedingly like Garrick's, but they would have no melody mixed with the postman's horn. If I could get a 'cake of Rabelais' ice, in which to mix them, they would thaw by your vestry fire, and give you some idea of London flummery. But our air is not intense enough to make such a cake ; therefore you must take it on my word, that I am flattered, inebriated, spoiled—Yet, as a *bon vivant* I owe it something, for it has brought me acquainted with dishes I never before heard off—wines I never before tasted—and fruit I never before saw, except through the fruiterer's windows.—I eat pine-apple the other day, and if  
that



that be the fruit the Devil offered Eve, I don't see how she could resist it.—Otway has dealt a little unfair in his bitter invective against women——

“ And for an apple damn'd mankind.”

He should have added that it was a pineapple ; with all my dramatick faith, I never could believe it was worth her while to transgress for a mere apple, even though it had been a nonpareil.

S H A N D Y.

At

At this time he belonged to an evening society, consisting of about twelve or fourteen members, who wished to unite to the festivity of Anacreon, the humour of Prior, the harmony of Pope ; and, above all, the sensibility and pleasantry of Sterne\*.

Part of the plan of this club, who met at a house in Maiden-lane once a week, was, to substitute some toast, in the place of a health to the political idol of the day, or the premier of the month, about whose real principles their different partizans are sometimes a little in the dark, and whose very names are the roots from whence spring up disputes,

“ About it, goddess, and about it.”

that

\* The name they adopted was the Shandean society.

that do not much tend to inform, or enliven the unfortunate hearers, and frequently end in

“Contention fierce, endless debate, and hate irreconcilable.”

To avoid which evils, it was a rule, that when the society meet, the President pour a libation, and drink to the memory of some departed genius, with whose merits every person present either was, or might be acquainted, under the denomination of a SKULL; after which, the next man gave a *sentiment*, and the next a *skull*. If for instance, they had drank the memory of Shakespeare, it was expected that he who was next in progression, should give a sentiment, which should have some allusion to the bard, or his writings, *and be new*. One equally apposite, was, to follow the names of

of Rabelais, Cervantes, or Sterne. But, alas ! it was soon found that such a rapid succession of skulls to sentiments, and sentiments to skulls, promoted so quick a circulation of the glass, as to clash with part of the plan of the institution, which was to go home tolerably sober\*.

To correct this inconvenience, it was ordained in council, that each member should bring with him a volume of his favourite writer, and read such part aloud as he thought would most contribute to the amusement of the society. Henderson produced a volume of Sterne, the god of his idolatry,  
entered

\* It was observed by a theatrical veteran, who sometimes honoured this society with a visit, that "though it was a very pleasant and chearful thing to get drunk, it was a very disagreeable business to get sober."

entered so fully into the spirit of his author, so happily discriminated the characters, and so forcibly exhibited them, that his companions finding more gratification in hearing him than themselves, which I believe will be acknowledged as strong a testimony of approbation as could be given by a society composed of reading men, constituted him reader to the club, and without an act of parliament, confirmed his right to a name which had been given him by a friend a short time before; decreeing that from, and after that time, he should be distinguished by the name of SHANDY, an appellation he retained many years.

The manner in which he read Sterne's works, threw new light upon many passages,

fages†, and was the source of much information as well as pleasantry. In the humorous passages it called forth flashes of merriment, and drew tears from every eye in the pathetic. Never shall I forget the effect he gave to the story of Le Fevre. It kindled a flame of admiration, and promoted a proposal to devote a day to the memory of the author, pour a libation over his grave, and speak a requiem to his departed spirit\*.

This

† It was first observed in this society, that until the appearance of the four asterisks ( \* \* \* \* ) with which Sterne has so frequently embellished his volumes, the two following lines were totally misconceived :

————— “ If weak women go astray,  
“ Their *stars* are more in fault than they.”

\* A rainy day prevented the full completion of the plan.

This was the determination of a moment, and assented to with enthusiastic eagerness. Shandy was appointed to select what he thought most fit for the occasion, and the next week produced an Ode, on which the candid critic will look with some allowance, when he considers it as the hasty production of a man little more than twenty years of age. The ardour with which the subject is treated, will, I hope, be considered as an adequate apology for the inaccuracies in some of the lines.

The occasion of its being written, the idolatry with which the name of Sterne was venerated by the company who attended the recital, and, above all, the energy, and pathetic

plan. The Ode was, therefore, read to a select party in a private house.

thetic feeling which was displayed by the speaker, gave it a most powerful effect, and it has surely too much merit to be buried in oblivion.

O D E.



## O D E.

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SPOKEN AT THE TOMB  
OF THE LATE LAWRENCE STERNE,  
ON HIS BIRTH DAY.

T H I S day be sacred,—let no hostile sound,  
Prophane the honours destin'd to his shade,  
Hence ye unhallow'd from this votive ground,  
No guest improper on our rites pervade.  
Before his name let wanton satire fly,  
The stoic's rancour melt before his beams,  
Let spleen avoid the lightning of his eye,  
And sink for shelter in oblivion's streams.  
Hence too, unfeeling and cold blooded guest,  
Dull ignorance, in solemn garments drest.

But come thou Goddess fair and free,  
On earth y'clep'd Philanthropy,  
Fill our bosoms, crown our board  
With all thy spirit can afford.  
Thy son, thy elder born we sing,  
Sound the hautboys, tune the string,

D

Need'tt

Need'st thou, goddess, need'st thou learn,  
 All our notes are rais'd to Sterne.  
 To him our grateful notes ascend,  
 Him we solicit to attend.

If 'midst the spheres,  
 Tun'd by the bright angelic choir,  
 Thy spirit hears  
 The tribute of a mortal lyre,  
 Deign, oh deign to shed thy power,  
 Thy mighty magic on this festive hour.  
 Nor, when my grateful verse reveals,  
 What every son of candour feels,  
 Let thy gentle soul disdain,  
 What alive had given thee pain ;  
 Our motives thou may'st try above,  
 And know our praise the tribute of our love.

Shame to the man, and to his memory shame,  
 Whose tongue licentious robs thee of thy fame.  
 Oh hadst thou liv'd when critics learn'd and wise,  
 To justice faithful, own'd no other ties ;  
 Dupes to no party, and no slaves to fear,  
 In sentence candid, yet in judgment clear,

Feeling

Feeling like men, like men their sentence own'd  
 Nor honour'd dullness, though by dunces thron'd,  
 Then had thy sacred bust in triumph rose,  
 And twining laurel screen'd thee from thy foes.  
 But he unhappy fell on evil days,  
 When *barren* sentiment usurp'd his praise.  
 When folly bore the honours and the crown,  
 Which should have deck'd his temples with renown.  
 When he from virtue greatest honour drew,  
 And held philanthropy to public view,  
 Adorn'd with all that can secure esteem,  
 The monarch's glory, and the poet's theme,  
 That balm of blood and confidence of mind,  
 Impell'd to pity, to suspicion blind,  
 That bosom, open to each social claim,  
 In virtue ardent, negligent of fame;  
 That heart, unable to repel relief,  
 In courage manly, feminine in grief.  
 In pleasure, harmless, innocent, and mild,  
 Warm as a man, forgiving as a child,  
 Ev'n then they dar'd to violate his page;  
 In virtue barren, fruitful in their rage,  
 Vex'd, inly vex'd, that on inspection clear,  
 They search'd their hearts and found no Toby there.

Stung, inly stung, they snatch'd the pen,  
 And told the tasteless sons of men,  
 That he whose spirits warm and full,  
 Could charm the gay, and wake the dull,  
 Could fix a smile on sorrow's brow,  
 And steal his grief he knew not how.  
 Could give new courage to the brave,  
 And bid his fame survive the grave,  
 Could give religion fresher charms,  
 And lead the stoic to her arms,  
 Could bid, (on touching fancy's string,)  
 Profusion in a desert spring,  
 Benign vibrations stir the trees,  
 And chearful rapture swell the breeze,  
 That he, with all these powers fraught,  
 Was loose in language, and impure in thought;  
 Believing virtue, their 'monition took,  
 And thank'd his stars he had not read the book.

The idle crew,  
 Who never knew  
 More than these mighty critics chose,  
 Soon caught the sound,  
 And echoed round,  
 The friends of Sterne were virtue's foes;

Error confirm'd, what malice had begun,  
Till fool and critic, lost their name in one.

Some there arose who spurn'd the slavish tie,  
And if they censur'd, would at least know why;  
But all too indolent, or all too dull,  
His fruits to gather, or his flowers to cull,  
The looser parts  
Attach'd their hearts,  
But when they hop'd some gross defect to clasp,  
His wit, like Mercury, escap'd their grasp.

If high in blood, voluptuous in thought,  
Some beam of beauty's emanative fire,  
As swift the meteor glided by he caught,  
It play'd perhaps around his heart,  
But urg'd not foul desire.  
Some kindred tenderness it warm'd,  
Which straight to other themes he drew,  
No longer virtue stood alarm'd,  
But join'd his passage as he upward flew.  
Too weak of wing, or impotent of fight,  
These readers lost him in the daring flight:  
Thus envy stung, or dullness veil'd his worth,  
'Till nature, warm and zealous in his cause,

Snatch'd him at once from this ill-judging earth,  
 To realms where angels hail'd him with applause.  
 Cervantes gaily grave, with accent sweet,  
 And laughing Rabelais led him to his seat ;  
 Yorick, in flashes of wild transport roar'd,  
 As when in Denmark's court he shook the board.  
 The social shades of tenderness and love,  
 Spread the glad tidings through the courts above.

All heard, all flew on wings of joy,  
 And welcom'd him to peace sincere,  
 To bliss whose raptures never cloy,  
 And happiness unknown to fear.

To us belongs to vindicate his fame,  
 To pluck the nettle from his sacred grave,  
 To turn the darts of malice from their aim,  
 And point his virtues to the good and brave ;  
 Nor this a task which indolence would shun,  
 'Tis half-accomplish'd when 'tis once begun ;  
 Obvious and full they strike upon the fight,  
 Nor ask assistance from collected light.

Oh !

Oh ! when ye hear his memory defam'd,  
 His wit misconstrued, or his heart bely'd,  
 Loud be his warm benevolence proclaim'd,  
 'Till rage and error blushing turn aside.  
 Whate'er their motive, ignorance, or whim,  
 They slander'd nature when they slander'd him.

For me, I own, with grateful transport mov'd,  
 I love his memory, as the man I lov'd.  
 Dear to my eye, but dearer to my heart,  
 Ne'er felt my soul more agonizing smart,  
 Than when that spirit from its bondage fled,  
 And gave a second Yorick to the dead.

Besides Sterne's works, he sometimes read select passages from Milton, Pope, Prior, Swift, Gray, and Junius.

The versification of Pope was too smooth for him, the same sound so perpetually recurring upon the same syllable, gave a flatness which fatigued the ear. The measure became vapid and lifeless. From this censure I except his manner of reading the *Dunciad*, to which he gave the full force of its satire.

Gray's Elegy he always mistook; by endeavouring to express energy, he destroyed that plaintive solemnity which is surely its peculiar characteristic. Indeed, the species of poetry in which this Elegy claims the first place, did not seem to be his *forte*. If he attempted the pathetic it became a whine, and his ear being too correct to  
bear



bear the sounds of his own voice, he changed his tones, and quitted his author's manner, preferring impropriety to dissonance. In the light airy tales of Prior, where laughing whimsicallity is the predominant feature, he was on his proper ground. To "the manly vigour of one sterling line" of Churchill, he added a thousand beauties. Junius, he esteemed the most perfect model of English prose, and although unacquainted with the politics of the day, gave full effect to every sentence of that most splendid writer. Paradise Lost he deemed a dramatic poem; strongly varied the different manners of Moloch, Belial, and the other fallen angels, and entering with sublime energy into the spirit of the various characters, became, as was said of his author, as a chariot-wheel wrought into a blaze by its own motion. It was grand, forcible, terrific.

But

But his talents as a reader are so well known from the specimens he exhibited at Freemasons-Hall, that it becomes unnecessary to expatiate upon them here. I am not afraid to aver, and it is an opinion grounded upon some reflection, that he read better in Maiden-lane than he did in Queen-street: it was less theatrical, and more chaste.

It is not very usual for the Dramatis Personæ to distinguish between acting, reciting, and reading; when reading they attempt to act, and imitate the passions which they are only required to enumerate.

In reading a letter to an audience, they do not always think it necessary to change their intonation. It is *acted*, and uttered with all the buskined pomp of heroic emphasis. Of this error Henderson was never guilty.

Mr.

Mr. Garrick was, I believe, esteemed to have approached very near perfection in playing, that he was above mediocrity in reciting or reading, no man will, I think, assert, who has heard him read, or recite his Jubilee Ode.

The great requisites necessary to constitute a reader, seem to be, a good ear, a voice capable of inflexion, an understanding of, and taste for, the beauties of the author, and a feeling, an ardour, an enthusiasm, which will warm the mind to display them; to all this must be added a judgment that will guard against extremes. Whether Mr. Henderfon was, or was not, in possession of *all* these requisites, is a question I will not presume to decide. I think he read better than any man I ever heard.

He

He used to sport an opinion, that the great difference of reading consisted in understanding, or not understanding, the author's meaning. I mentioned instances where men had written with great knowledge of their subject, and expressed their sentiments in glowing and brilliant colours, who yet so totally mangled and weakened their own works when they attempted to read them, as to obscure the brightest passages, and disguise the most obvious sentences. " Sir, said he, rest assured, they did not fully understand what they read. Some men have a trick of stringing words together, so as to impose upon the understanding, but they do not wholly conceive what they are about. Let any one be fully and powerfully impressed with an author's meaning, and if his voice and articulation are not defective, he cannot fail impressing that meaning upon his hearers. A female mendicant under-  
stands

stands what she wants, and therefore her entreaties are uttered in the tones best calculated to reach the heart, and with an emphasis that rarely offends the ear. A thoroughly enraged scold is infinitely more pointed in her oratory, than is a gentleman in a wig and band at Westminster-hall.

“ She is animated from conceiving her subject, and feeling the passion, she represents it. An infant is perfect master of the art of supplication before he can speak, and when he attains that power never asks for any thing with an improper emphasis until he is *taught* to read, when he is harrassed about points, confounded by a multitude of instructions, and sent to a *Demosthenes maker*, who gives him rules for utterance, and modes of speech, and a *manner* of delivery, that enables the well instructed young gentleman

man to torture the ears of all within compass of his voice, whether he is doomed to exhibit in the pulpit, or the senate, at the bar, or upon the stage. The human voice is in a great degree artificial, and whatever any one chuses to make it. You find general similitude in the tones of people of one profession. One set of tones are appropriated to the bar, another to the pulpit. I have heard that most sublime composition, the burial service, flavoured over in such a manner that I could scarcely understand two words in a sentence, and yet the voice has had a kind of solemn sound, a pious noise, that has given great effect.

“ Sounds have infinite power without words. This should seem to extend to music, but with me it does not. I have little gratification from what I am told is exquisite.

Some

Some one says, it is become the art of executing difficulties. It was a good wish, would to heaven these *difficulties* were *impossibilities*.

“ When I recited Mr. Garrick’s Ode in a private room, I felt what I said, and I believe gave it some effect. Very different was it upon the stage. My feelings were weakened and confounded by the band, my voice lost its scale, and was overpowered by the music in the orchestra.”

This, it must be acknowledged is a rhapsody, and as such was spoken, but there are some truths in it.

Mr. Pope exhibited an instance, that a man may have the most delicate ear for the harmony of numbers, and yet have no sort of taste for the harmony of sounds.

Swift

Swift is another example, and I am inclined to suspect from Mr. Garrick's manner of singing, that he had not, whatever he might chuse to profess, much knowledge of, or taste in, music.

Would it be supposed from the measured, harmony of Dr. Johnson's periods, that he had scarcely any perception of it. He knew a drum from a trumpet, and a bagpipe from a guittar, which he owned was about the extent of his knowledge in music\*.

Mr. Henderson had great delight in perusing books that abounded in the marvellous. Sir John Mandeville's Travels, Pontoppidan's Norway, Peter Wilkins' Voyage to the Moon, or Wanley's Wonders of the  
 Little

\* Boswell's Journal, 1st edition, page 363.



Little World were *in deliciis*.\* With equal eagerness he fought for and read the accounts

\* We say *Noscitur a Socio*—May we not, with equal truth, say, *Noscitur a Libris*.

A knowledge of the particular species of books which attract men of genius and study in their hours of desultory reading, would be curious and worth speculation: such knowledge might sometimes enable us to develop the bias of their characters with more truth than do their gravest biographers.

For the gratification of the curious I have subjoined the titles of a few books in Mr. Henderson's study, in some of which the ludicrous and the horrible, "for masterhippe do strive."—The lamentable and true Tragedie of Maister Arden of Feversham, who was most wickedlie murdered by means of his wantonne Wife, who hired two desperate Ruffians, Blacke Will and Shakbagge, to kill him. Life and Death of Lewis Gaufredy, with his abominable Sorceries, after selling himself to the Devil. A bloody Newe Yeares Gifte. A

counts of murders, battles, massacres, martyrdoms, earthquakes, the death of Regulus,

true Declaration of the cruel and most bloody Murther of Maister Robert Heath, in his own house at High Holborne, being the signe of the Fire Brande. A true Relation how a Woman at Atherbury having used divers horrid Imprecations, was suddainlie burned to Ashes, *there being no Fire neare her.* Hellish Murder committed by a French Midwife. Histories of Apparitions, Spirits, Visions, and other wonderful Illusions of the Devil. The Surey Demoniac, or Satan, his dreadful Judgements upon Richard Dugdale. A Pleasaunte Treatise of Witches, their Impes and Meetings. Newes from Italie, or a most lamentable Tragedie lately befallen. *Phylomithic*, wherein outlandish Birds, Beasts, and Fishes, are taught to speak English. Tarquatus Vandermer, his seven Yeares Studie in the Arte offe Magicke upon the twelve Monthes of the Yeare. The Devil Conjured, by Thomas Lodge: a Discourse of the sottillie Practises of Divilles by Witches. The Miseries of inforst Marriage. Lavaterus of Ghostes and Spirits walking by Night, and of straunge Noyfes, Crackes,

gulus\*, or burning of Cranmer, particulars of  
a criminal's behaviour when broken upon the  
wheel,

Crackes, *and so forth*. Baylie, his Wall Flower, as  
it grew out of the stone Chamber in Newgate. Ad-  
mirable Historie of a Magician, who seduced a pious  
Womanne to be a Witch. And though last, not least  
in Love, King James, his Dæmonologiæ.

\* A writer of the last century has thrown this la-  
mentable story into a most ludicrous point of view. I  
believe the lines are not generally known: perhaps it  
will be said they are not worth knowing; however here  
they are:—

When the bold Carthaginian,  
Fought with Rome for dominion,  
Little Reg was ta'en in the strife;  
When his eye-lids they par'd,  
Good Lord how he star'd,  
And could not go sleep for his life.

wheel, the barbarities Cortes and other zealous propagators of the gospel inflicted upon the Indians, the tortures suffered by the victims of superstition in the Inquisition, or any event whether in, or out of nature, which was calculated to give strong and forcible impressions.\*

By

When the bold Carthaginian,  
Fought with Rome for dominion,  
Little Reg was ta'en in the quarrel,  
So they took him up a hill,  
And fore against his will,  
They trundled him down in a barrel.

To those idolaters of ancient patriotism, and ancient history, to whom this description may appear a shocking insult on the memory of so celebrated a hero, it may be a consolation to recollect, that the best critics and commentators, have esteemed the whole story of the death of Regulus, to be a fiction.

\* If it should be inferred from hence that his disposition was cruel, the inference would be unjust.

Mortimer,

By the perusal of such books as these, objects of terror became familiar to his mind,

Mortimer, the historical painter, in whom were united the savage grandeur of Salvator Rosa, and the terrific graces of Spagnolette ; who, joined to a sublimity of idea, and accuracy of delineation, not exceeded by Michael Angelo, a delicacy of pencil equal to Teniers ; was most happy, and, I think most successful, when sketching, or painting objects, from which the common eye withdrew. His four paintings of the progress of vice, in the very well chosen collection of Doctor Bates, of Missenden, is one example of this truth.

From hints in Fox's Book of Martyrs, he made a number of most spirited sketches, in which are represented the sufferings of men, women, and children. Scorching their hands with lighted tapers, burning their eyes out with hot irons, and the whole exhibition of the uses made of those powerful engines of argument, the whips, hooks, racks ; but, above all, the *thumb vice*, by which unbelievers are screwed up to the proper faith.

mind, and perhaps enabled him to exhibit with such warmth of colouring, portraits

Yet, with this disposition for contemplating, and displaying such objects, Mortimer had a soul, "Open as day to melting charity, a tear for pity," and a heart the most susceptible of tender impressions. He made the kindest allowances for the errors of others, and would not have trod upon the poor beetle. When he erred, and who shall dare to name any man as faultless? his errors had their root in virtues which the generous warmth of his heart carried to excess. Added to all this, he had an hilarity that brightened every eye, and gladdened every heart. I knew his mind well, but that knowledge should have deterred me from attempting to describe it, had I considered that Sterne has so exactly delineated the leading features by which it was actuated, in the benevolence and sensibility of character which distinguished his uncle Toby.

In the society of Mortimer I passed some of the happiest years of my life, and the remembrance of the very intimate, brotherly, and unbroken friendship with which

we

traits of Shakespeare's most terrific characters, from which spirits of a more exquisite texture, unaccustomed to the contemplation of such objects, would shrink with horror. For I believe those who have hearts of such susceptibility as to receive impressions of joy, love, or grief, in an extreme degree, are by no means the most eminently qualified for communicating those impressions to an audience. A man whose feelings are so alive as to overbalance the disproportionate strength of his mind, becomes liable to be awed into forgetfulness, the passions are overwhelmed in a storm of their own

E 4

raising,

we were united until his death, affords me one of those melancholy pleasures which may be felt, but cannot be described—A tear drops at the recollection. The loss of such a friend leaves a chasm in one's life and happiness, which is very, very, rarely filled up.

raising, and the actor drowned in a deluge of his own tears. The mind wrought up to real tenderness, loses, in some measure, the power of expressing that which is fictitious, and excess of sensibility defeats its own purpose. \* There is a point to which the passions must be raised, to display that exhibition of them which scatters contagious

\* This may be thought at first sight to clash with the maxim of Horace ; but, maturely considered, may perhaps be found nearly to coincide with it.

I am told this is not the philosophy of the green-room, notwithstanding which, I suspect the contrary opinion to be the philosophy of the distaff. To say, though with the utmost dramatic dignity of emphasis,

“ *He, must, have, feeling, who, makes, others, feel;*”

May be replied to by,

“ *Who drives fat oxen, should himself be fat.*”



gious tendernefs through the whole Theatre, but carried, “ though but the breadth of a hair,” beyond that point, the picture becomes an overcharged caricature, as likely to create laughter, as diffufe diftrefs. There is a certain *term* in the mind which is exactly proportionate to produce sympathy, *beyond* which limit, or *within* it, the effect ceafes to be produced. \*

The

\* It is a general opinion, that a good player muft have a found judgment, and conceive his author’s meaning before he can exprefs it ; yet I have feen inftances where nature having denied an underftanding, has kindly given what did well enough as a fubftitute, and paffed mufter before an audience very decently. Thefe inftances, indeed, were many years ago—I believe ;—but, inftead of an opinion, I venture an anecdote, and let the gentle reader draw his own conclufion.

When

The power of mimickry which Henderson possessed in a most eminent degree,  
and

When the late Mr. Reddish's indisposition of mind rendered him incapable of fulfilling his duties at the Theatre, and he was by his inability reduced from a salary of twelve or fourteen pounds a week, to an income of seventy pounds a year from the fund, some of his friends made interest with the manager to grant him a benefit. The play advertised was Cymbeline, and Mr. Reddish was announced for Posthumus. He was to pass an hour previous to his performance at a house where I was asked to meet him. He came into the room with the step of an idiot, his eye wandering and his whole countenance vacant. I congratulated him on his being enough recovered to perform. Yes, sir, replied he, I shall perform, and in the garden scene I shall astonish you!—In the garden scene, Mr. Reddish?—I thought you were to play Posthumus.—No, sir, I play Romeo.—My good man, said the gentleman of the house, you play Posthumus. Do I, replied he; I am sorry for it. However what must be, must be. At the time appointed he set out for the Theatre.

and exercised with that indiscriminate negligent sportiveness, which meaning no evil,

Theatre. The gentleman who went with him, for he was not capable of walking without a guide, told me that his mind was so impressed with the character of Romeo, he was reciting it all the way, and when he came into the green-room it was with extreme difficulty they could persuade him he was to play any other part. That when the time came for his appearance, they pushed him on the stage, fearing he would begin with a speech of Romeo. With the same expectation I stood in the pit close to the orchestra, and being so near had a perfect view of his face. The instant he came in sight of the audience his recollection seemed to return, his countenance resumed meaning, his eye appeared lighted up, he made the bow of modest respect, and went through the scene much better than I had ever before seen him. On his return to the green-room, the image of Romeo returned to his mind, nor did he lose it until his second appearance, when the moment he had the *cue*, he went through the scene, and in this weak and *imbecile* state of his understanding, performed

evil, feared no consequences, was the source of some inconveniences, which led him to repent having displayed it in the unguarded manner he frequently did.

Mr.

performed the whole better than I ever saw him before, and it was a character in which I had seen him often, and never contemptible. But he appeared to much greater advantage then, than when he had the full exercise of his reason. His manner was less assuming, and more natural. After that time he never performed.

It brought to my recollection an anecdote I have heard of his late majesty, who, naming an officer that he intended should command in an expedition of some consequence, was told by the Duke of Newcastle that "the gentleman was by no means eligible for so important a station, being positively mad." Is he, replied the king, he shall go for all that, and before he sets out I wish to my God he would bite some of my Generals, and make them mad too."

Mr. Garrick was at this time the object of his imitation, and not much gratified with the freedom, nor much disposed to serve the person who took it; under these circumstances an introduction to him was difficult, his different friends were therefore sought out and applied to for their interest. Among other applications, one was made to the late Paul Hiffernan, of dull memory, who was at that time one of the attendants at the managers *levee*.

When the name and intention of Henderson was announced to Hiffernan, he looked in his face with the utmost gravity for half a minute, and then, like a drill serjeant giving the word of command, vociferated “ *Please to stand upon your pins.* ” — Henderson stood up. — Mr. Hiffernan did the same. — Now, says he, young gentleman,

gentleman, I'll soon see if you'll ever make an actor.—I'll soon see whether or not you are fit for the stage. Then stalking with solemn dignity to a table drawer, he opened it, and took out a ball of packthread, from which he first cut off a long piece and tied the knife to the end, by way of plummet, this done marched up to the young candidate, and having first got upon a chair, to be the better able to reach, held the packthread to the top of Henderson's head, and let the knife drop to the ground, by which it was now seen he intended to try how tall he was. This ceremony over he descended, took out of his pocket a two foot rule, and measured the length of the packthread; then putting on a most melancholy countenance, shook his head, and exclaimed, “ young gentleman, I am sorry to mortify you, I am very sorry to mortify you, but

but go your ways home, set your thoughts upon somewhat else, mind your business, be it what it will, and remember I tell you, for the sock or buskin you won't do; —you will not do, fir, by an inch and a quarter.

This must be acknowledged to be somewhat in the spirit of Serjeant Kite, but it was Paul's mode of measuring the talents of those who aspired to the stage. —*Excellent critic !*"

A theatrical veteran, whose abilities have been looked up to by the last age with admiration, and are regarded by the present age with astonishment; whose judgment was thought matured by time, and whose decrees were uttered with that firmness and oracular dignity, which confounds if it does not convince, and silences where  
it

it cannot confute, was requested to hear Mr. Henderfon rehearse, point out his errors, and advise the best method of improving his recitation. “ Sir,” says this Aristarchus of the drama, “ Sir, the young man has genius, but the first thing he does must be to *unlearn* all that he has already *learned*, until he does that, he cannot *learn* to be a player.”

So severe was the sentence of this Nestor of the green-room, but even this, did not deter the stage-struck hero from his theatrical pursuit, he had the true enthusiastic ardour which gains strength from opposition; every discouragement seemed rather to encrease than abate his eagerness; and as access was not to be had to Mr. Garrick, he endeavoured to obtain an introduction to some of the other managers. But managers, like ministers of state, were  
not,



not, he found, very willing to hear, and when they did hear, not very easy to please.

One objected to him, that never having been upon any stage, he was unstudied in his parts. Another excellent judge of the English language, that in reading Pope, he made *verse* of it. A third, that his voice was not strong enough for the stage. A fourth, that his speaking was husky, and his tones too fat.\*

F

He,

\* His continual imitation of Mr. Garrick's voice, might, in a degree, contribute to give his own a resemblance of it; and that imitation was formed upon tones, which, melodious as they had once been, began to contract the huskiness so commonly attendant upon old age. His so frequently repeating speeches in the manner of Falstaff, gave what the same critic calls a *farness* of tone.

He, however, had friends, who renewed application to Mr. Garrick, and the manager's good understanding seemed to have vanquished his resentment, for he heard him rehearse, said, that his voice had neither strength nor modulation enough for the London stage, but advised him to try his powers at a country theatre, for the purpose of forwarding an introduction to which, he would write to Mr. Palmer, then manager of the Bath company, who gave for answer, that he should have an engagement, if approved of by Mr. Keaseberry, who was then director of a *corps dramatique* at Richmond. Mr. Keaseberry heard and approved, and, in September, 1772, Mr. John Henderson was enrolled as one of the Bath comedians for three years.

The first year he was to receive one guinea per week ; the second, one guinea  
and

and a half ; and the third year, two guineas. Besides this enormous salary, he was to have an annual benefit.

The object of his ambition attained, he trembled with apprehension, doubted if his figure was sufficiently important, questioned if he was grounded enough in any one character to venture it before the awful tribunal of the public, and could he have protracted his *entrée* for another year, would most gladly have done it : so great was his dread of disappointment and disgrace, that he assumed the name of Courtenay, and, under the protection of that name, made his *coup d'essai* at Bath, on the 6th of October, 1772, in the part of *Hamlet*.

The writer of this went with a number of friends from London to Bath, to see the *debut* of this young candidate for the dra-

matic laurel, whose apprehensions were so alive, and whose fears were so excessive, that it was with difficulty he advanced upon the stage, and made his first bow to the audience. They received him with that indulgence which is so generally exercised to a young performer, and when he spoke, gave that still respectful attention, which is perhaps a stronger testimony of approbation than the thundering clapping of a thousand hands. But of the gratification which results from this mode of applause, he had a large portion at the end of each act; and before the conclusion of the first, his fears were so far dispelled, and his terror so much subsided, that his understanding recovered its natural expansion; and although his powers had not attained their full maturity, yet the strong traits of judgment he displayed in conceiving the outline of the part, the sensibility and feeling he exhibited through

through the whole of the performance, the accuracy of his articulation, and the proper modulation of his tones, marked themselves as distinctly as they did at any subsequent period.

In that fiery ordeal for dramatic candidates, Hamlet's advice to the players, he manifested so clear a conception of his author, with so much ease and propriety of recitation, as displayed his power of discrimination, and gave every right to augur the excellence he afterwards attained.\*

Old

\* When the performance ended, I went into the green-room—Let the reader of extreme delicacy avoid this note ; or, if she reads it, not accuse me of omitting the proper warning.

Old Mr. Giffard, under whose management Garrick made his first appearance, and who had been witness to the dramatic rise of  
of

Mr. Henderson's predecessor, in the character, was *Lee*, who used to play it in a suit of black velvet, much too large for Henderson; he was, therefore, under the necessity of performing it in a suit of black cloth. Extreme agitation occasioned a perspiration. The coat was wet as if it had been "immersed in the ocean." The performance ended, Hamlet resigned his habit to the keeper of the wardrobe, who received it with astonishment and horror; hung it to the fire, lifted up both his hands, and exclaimed, in the true nasal tone of a parish clerk, "Heaven bless us all! what a sorry sight is here: 'twas the Lord's mercy he did not play it in the black velvet—it would have raised all the pile. They may talk of Muster Lee, and Muster Lee, and Muster Lee, but Muster Lee is nothing to this man—for what they call perspiration." A person present observed, that the severest critics must acknowledge the young gentleman had played the character with great warmth, if not with spirit.

of many of the most distinguished actors. Who, in the course of a long life, had seen the dawnings and progressive exertions, of numbers whose abilities had been sanctioned by public approbation ; Mr. Giffard thought his talents of the first magnitude, desired to be gratified by a morning's rehearsal upon the stage, when, with the spirit of prophecy, the old man foretold the future eminence of the young actor, returned to Ealing, and died in a few days.

Mr. Henderson performed Hamlet a second time a few nights afterwards ; his feelings are described by his own words, in a letter which he wrote to a lady in London, and his reception, in some which he wrote to a clergyman, with whom he corresponded in the neighbourhood of London.

To

To Mrs. I——,

*Bath, October 24th, 1772.*

I AM obliged to you beyond my powers of expression, for your kind sollicitudes on my account. I haste to answer them.— I had a very full house to the second Hamlet, and I played it much better than when you saw me, when my terror sunk my figure and impaired my animation.— I had a better audience still last Tuesday to Richard, which (although I was more frightened then ever) I was much applauded for,

I am a great favorite here, if being followed at the Theatre, and invited to private



vate parties among people of consequence, are proofs of it.—I never took any thing kinder in my life than your coming to see me ; it was a mark of attention, friendship, and regard, that, as I am conscious of not altogether deserving, delighted me exceedingly—It would have delighted me still more to have deserved it. But that you know is my fault—It shall be corrected. You will find me very different in my manners.

Will you give my kind services to Miss ———, though she is a sorry jade and don't deserve them, for she has the insolence to let my letter remain unanswered. Yet, upon recollection, there may be kindness in it, she may not be willing to engage me in a correspondence to which I am unequal. Adieu, my dear madam.—This is a  
villainous

villainous short letter, but I must break it off,

“Left Benedict should enter full of fear.”

J. COURTENAY.

To the Rev. Mr. D——

*Bath, 9th October, 1772.*

DEAR DOCTOR,

YOU are among those of my friends whom I cannot suffer to be unaddress'd by this opportunity of Mr. I——'s return. He will tell you my success, and you will feel that pleasure from it, which a mind and friendship like yours, cannot but feel, from the applause and approbation conferred on all you esteem and patronize.— I know, my dear sir, that I am very near  
your

your heart, and I thank you, I esteem you, I love you for it. You distinguished me when none else would ; you encouraged me when others bore hard upon me. Never, never can I forget the kindness of your conduct towards me—Something too much of this. You must excuse the shortness of this letter, I have many to write, and very little time——Will you honour me with a line?—I cannot say that I will answer it, but I will reply to it,——You will remember that my stage name is Courtenay ; to you, my dear sir, I will never sign any other than the name you gave me. I value it on that account, and therefore subscribe myself,

S H A N D Y.

To

TO MR. HENDERSON.

*25th November, 1772.*

DEAR SHANDY,

I cannot well describe the pleasure I received from the news of your success, without some danger of expressing myself in terms which, by the invidious, might perhaps be construed into flattery. This is one reason why I have not answered your letter before, and not pressed forward among the first list of your congratulators.

Your letter, as it seems to have been dictated by a generous heart, which accepted the will for the deed, does you more honour than all your talents, brilliant as they are, and would to heaven my power had  
been

been equal to my inclination, to render you any essential services. All friends here join in the general joy at the favourable account of Mr. Courtenay's reception.

As you know my real opinion of your genius and abilities, and that I never had any doubt concerning your success, provided your voice would hold out, it would be ridiculous to take up your time in paying compliments to that merit which I hope will soon be as conspicuous to the world, as it long ago was to me.

I trust you will not think the short advice which I am about to give, to be altogether impertinent ; although your prudence and good sense may render it unnecessary.

Beware then, my dear friend, of the intoxication of applause, and remember that  
great

great application, perseverance, caution, and continual efforts to improve, are principal, if not the only steps which can support you in your ascent to the summit of a lasting fame.

I hope you will avoid every species of intemperance, particularly that of the tongue. Do not despise the old adage, however trite it may be : viz. “ Many a man hath sacrificed his friend for his joke.” Be the player, but be the player no where but upon the stage. Out of the verge of the theatre, low buffoonery from a comedian, I hold to be errant prostitution. Why should not he be as much the gentleman as a person of any other profession ?

I mean not to lay any restraint, Shandy, upon the genuine sallies of innocent humour and wit, but upon that kind of pleasantry  
and

and ridicule, the object of which is the degradation of character: a vein of mirth which speciously pretends to exhilarate the spirits, whilst it insidiously wounds the heart.

Are you not ready, by this time, to break out, and to exclaim in the language of rage and impatience, “ Something too much of this preaching, my dear Doctor—you do not consider that my ears are now open to no sounds but the thunders of an applauding audience, and my eyes accustomed to read nothing with pleasure, or with patience, but the *billet doux* of some love-sick languishing nymph.”

May you, my dear Shandy, in your public performances, be always received with the heart-cheering plaudits of the judicious,

dicious, nor ever by your private conduct forfeit the esteem and approbation of the virtuous and good.

I am, &c.

To the Rev. Mr. D——.

*Bath, Dec. 25, 1772.*

MY VERY DEAR DOCTOR,

IT is so common a thing to fill letters with excuses for their shortness, and apologies for want of time, that I am almost ashamed of doing it, and yet the true reason I have not replied to your friendly letter, is, the intense fatigue of my studies, together with the visits I am obliged to make; for I find it necessary to be as attentive to my reputation out of the theatre as in it; and  
don't



don't think me vain, if I say, that the more my acquaintance is extended, the more my reputation is encreased——Enquire of me, Doctor, I am confident you can hear nothing of me which can disgrace your virtues to be in friendship with, or your genius to have distinguished. I am in intimacy with a great many people of the first rank and genius in Bath, and my connections are too polite to admit of the low buffoonery you caution me against. I am now situated to my heart's wish, I converse with men of letters, and am well received by them; I am in high favour with the manager, for which see my letter to J. I——, a few days ago.

I have resumed my own name in a Prologue, written for me by a gentleman of great talents, and a painter, though not a painter by profession. His genius is like

G

the

the Dryades and Hamadryades, embosomed in woods and fields. In plain English, he is, perhaps, the greatest landscape painter we have :

*“ By heaven, and not a master taught.”*

I must tell you something which I know will please you. I am perfectly altered in my manners. I can now be gay and merry without being very licentious. I am willing to owe this to your advice, because you are among the few from whom it is not very painful to receive obligations.

I have been on the stage three months, and I have played ten different characters, all of the first importance ; this will shew you how I pass my time, and convince you that it is not possible for me to have many leisure hours. Mr. Garrick has  
done

done me great services by writing of me to several of his friends here. I intend to write very soon to thank him for them—I thank Apollyon for his remembrance ; make mine to him, and to all your family.

I am, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

G 2

To

To the Rev. Mr. D——.

DEAR DOCTOR,

I Wish to reply to your last friendly letter, but I have little or nothing to say, and scarce any time to say that little or nothing in. It is needless to take up much time or paper, in assuring you, that I have a very great, and almost filial affection for you ; for I might say that in three words, and tell you, I am grateful.

I have played Lear with very great approbation, which I know will please you, and I continue to be received with respect, and  
even

even friendship, almost wherever I go. You may be assured I will forget none of your excellent monitions to preserve this, and indeed I am so far altered that I seldom jest, and still seldomer ridicule. I have every reason to be satisfied with having come here, for I could not have been more happy, I think, any where, and I do not doubt but that it will be for my future advantage.

The manager, I believe, esteems me, for no man can be more distinguished than I am by him. \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

I am extremely obliged to you for your offer as to the *Classicks*, and I hope to shew you in the summer, that I wish to improve

by your instructions. You must have patience, if I sometimes discover too much miscellaneous rambling. I will be as attentive as I can.

I am, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

In

In the course of this season, the manager finding his new performer attracted the attention of the public, introduced him in near twenty different characters, to many of which he must have been very unequal.\*

He however became popular, was spoken of by the title of the Bath Roscius, in high estimation with the frequenters of the Theatre, and distinguished by the friendship and protection of men, whose approbation will always confer honour and

G 4

create

\* I have not a recollection of them all, but the principal were Hamlet, Richard the Third, Benedict, Macbeth, Bobadil, which he attempted, and very successfully performed, in the manner of Mr. Woodward; Bayes, Don Felix, Earl of Essex, Hotspur Fribble Lear, Hastings, Alonzo, and Alzuma; he ~~ascribed~~ credited Garrick's Ode.

create envy,\* and in consequence of this was most unmercifully abused in the Bath papers both for what he did, and what he did

\* Lord Newnham, whose taste is not less distinguished than his rank.—Mr. Gainborough, whose portraits exhibit, not merely the map of the countenance, but the character, the soul of the original.—His landscapes,—But to name works which fascinate and delight every eye, is to praise. Mr. Philip Thicknesse, whose partiality is the more valuable, as it is neither lightly or indiscriminately bestowed. Of his warm regards, and friendly zeal; Mr. Henderson, as well as the writer of these anecdotes, received many proofs. Mr. Taylor, very properly distinguished, as the painter “by heaven, and not a master taught;” and though last mentioned, ever first in kind and attentive services, the author of the West Indian.



did not do \* How far their fatires gave  
uneasiness to the object they were aimed  
at,

\* The following little Epigram was written, I believe, by a gentleman of Bath, who afterwards became a partial friend to Henderson, and who is a proof that good sense and candour is open to conviction, for he acknowledged that his sentence was too harsh.

*E X T E M P O R E,*

On Mr. COURTENAY's attempting to recite Mr.  
Garrick's Jubilee Ode, on the 9th of Dec. 1772.

When Courtenay spouted Garrick's Ode,  
How did the man mistake his road ;  
And void of all the rules of art,  
Distracted rave through every part,  
Tearing his lungs, 'till out of breath,  
Wild as the witches in Macbeth,  
Whilst the old Bard who stood behind,  
Attentive on his arm reclin'd,

Affected

at, will appear by an extract from a letter, dated 24th May 1773.

Affected at the murder'd tale  
Trembled, and as his ghost look'd pale.

I thought the cloud-capt towers, and all  
The gorgeous palaces would fall  
With Shakespeare off his pedestal,  
For the whole fabric tottering shook  
From its foundations when he spoke ;  
Garrick himself, had he been by  
Had died——but not in extacy.

}

To

To Mr. J———.

————— There is a writer here  
“ who has discovered no talent, (but judgment in his signature) called the INVALID, who has, I hear, abused me and my Prologue,\* which has saved me a few shillings, for I was about to hire somebody to  
fatirize

\* A Prologue he spoke 22d December, 1772, upon resuming his own name, which follows :

(Written by JOHN TAYLOR, Esq. of the Circus.)

WHEN first the advent'rous bard stands forth to  
view,  
Those early sketches which with care he drew ;  
When he, poor man, in lines uncouth and lame,  
Just ventures out a candidate for fame,  
Trembling

satirize me into public conversation ; the  
people here having agreed to applaud me  
without

Trembling, he dreads a *damned* poet's fate,  
The judges shrug—the carping critics hate.  
Some partial friend, just at this anxious hour,  
With cheering gaiety's reviving power,  
Laughs at his doubts——“Nay, prithee don't recede,  
Take courage man!—My word for't you'll succeed ;  
Out with your works, and let the world decide  
On their true merit—while your name you hide.”  
This fancy strikes his weak distracted brain,  
He smiles, and simpering, says, he'll write again.  
Aye——but have patience, Tom, his friend replies ;  
The world—the world, my lad, has piercing eyes ;  
Mankind first try—by them alone be cheer'd,  
Their praise be courted, or their censure fear'd.  
——The piece comes out by Tom, John, Dick, or  
Harry,  
No matter which—perhaps it may miscarry.  
But no—the learn'd approve and praise the style,  
The ladies read it—e'en the critics smile.

Straight

without much enquiry why or where-  
fore.

Mr.

Straight to his friend he runs, to tell the news.  
The world, dear sir, my work with pleasure views ;  
The first edition, sir, I just now hear,  
Is quite run off—a second will appear,  
And since that met the applause I wish'd to feel,  
May I not now my real name reveal ?

Ye candid fair, while wav'ring here I stand,  
In sad suspense—O lend a helping hand ;  
May I, protected by your fostering care,  
When critics murmur, to your court repair ;  
I have, alas ! on this wide sea of fame,  
Launch'd my poor bark, under a feigned name,  
That if your frowns foretold a boisterous gale,  
I might in time have lower'd my shiv'ring fail ; \*  
Have soon retreated from the stormy main,  
And hopeless shrunk into my port again.

May

\* Shivering, a sea term when a fail is not wholly filled with the wind,  
nor quite aback, as the seamen say.

Mr. Colman has done me some service of that sort, for which I always bow very low to him, and he takes it for respect.\*

The

May your kind favour still to me be shewn;  
My merit pleads not—make the act your own;  
And since you've deign'd to approve my weak essays,  
From princely Hamlet, down to puzzling Bayes,  
I now, with trembling hand the mask resign,  
And hence appear before this beauteous shrine.

—————Courtenay no more!

O name so flattering to my fame-sick heart,  
I bid farewell—we now, though friends, must part.  
To thee thy borrower grateful tribute pays,  
With thee, he hopes, not now to lose your praise.  
Shine still propitious!—Still your smiles renew,  
And Courtenay's pains in Henderson review;  
Perfect the work that's now but rudely form'd,  
And save the fruit, which in the bud you warm'd.

\* Mr. Colman said, when Henderson performed Shylock, his dress was so shabby it seemed just borrowed  
from

The tide of partiality being high in his favour, he had in contemplation the purchase of a fourth share in the Bristol Theatre. The money was provided, when he declined embarking in the scheme, for reasons which appear in the following letter.

To

from a pawn-broker, and gave him the idea of a black Lear."

This censure falls with more weight upon the manager of the wardrobe, than the performer, and bears more resemblance to the cavil of a French taylor, than the candid critique one would have expected from the author of the Jealous Wife.

To Mr. I——.

*Sunday Night, Nov. 1, 1772.*

DEAR FRIEND,

THIS is the information I have gathered. The most money that has been paid for any share has been four hundred pounds. There are four partners at 400l. each, and one of them (the not acting manager) has forty pounds a season allowed him for his interest of the 400l. together with the freedom of the Theatre for himself, family, and friends. Three hundred pounds a season is paid for the rent, and the fifty proprietors are admitted gratis to all performances whatsoever at the Theatre, which is thought much overloaded. It was rather a losing scheme to Powell and Holland. It is



is known that Mr. King lost above eighty pounds the season he held it ; and the last season, 'tis said, each partner lost between one and two hundred pounds.

The whole property belonging to the partners, of clothes, scenes, &c. is supposed to be worth under a thousand pounds, and there are only two years to come of the lease. There are three votes of the three acting managers in the conduct of the theatre.

There is no patent, which subjects the managers to this inconvenience, that as their performers are not engaged by forms of law, they can quit them when they please.

These are the informations I have collected. It really does not strike me as any thing so devoutly to be wished for. I can never cease to love you, my dear friend, for

H

the

the extreme sollicitude you express on this account. I really feel your zeal to serve me, will, from its precipitance, go too far. I am myself utterly unqualified to manage players, and I must be at the discretion of  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Do, pray Jack, weigh it well. I have these informations from an authority you could not doubt, if I were at liberty to mention it—I am persuaded, that if I chuse to play in the summer at Bristol, I may make almost my own terms, and then I have nothing to lose.

It will be a great charge upon my mind, and I have need of all the time, attention and study, I can have, to preserve the reputation I have got here. Another thing is, I shall want some recess from the fatigues of the season, and my chief hope and  
 ambition

ambition is, to pass the summer with you, and my other friends.

There may be soon a time when your kindness may find a more serviceable exercise, and I am assured from your extreme goodness in this, that it will not lose any of its ardour. You will observe, that four hundred pounds is the most that ever was given for any share, *and he asks 400l.*

I am of a patient, philosophical temper, and can live as well upon the little pittance I have as if it was larger, at least 'till my acquaintance is such as will require an additional expence in clothes,

In three words, I have not set my heart upon it ; on the contrary, if it is secured for me, I shall enter upon it with trepidation and doubt. I know L—— grounds

his opinion of its success, upon the favourable reception I have met with here. But the people of Bristol, I suppose, are like other people, capricious, inconstant.

The theatre was supported, it seems, by them for one season, but after that it flagged even when *Powell* was there.

Adieu, the bell rings.

J. COURTENAY.

When

When the Bath theatre closed, he returned to London, and in his hours of unguarded pleasantry, frequently gratified himself and friends by ludicrous imitations of the different performers, particularly Mr. Garrick, who being informed that Henderson's voice was such an echo of the green-room, invited him to a breakfast, and requested a specimen of his art. The three first examples were Barry, Woodward, and Love, and happy would it have been for Henderson had he concluded there. Mr. Garrick appeared in extacy at the imitation ; but, Sir, said he, you'll kill poor Barry, slay Woodward, and break Love's heart ! Your ear must be wonderfully correct, and your voice most singularly flexible—I am told you *have me*. Do, my dear Sir, let me hear what I am, for if you are equally exact with me as with Barry and Woodward, I shall know precisely what my peculiar tones

are—*Henderson* excused himself, by saying, that Mr. Garrick's powers were superior to imitation, that he would not presume to attempt it, and begged leave to decline so hazardous an undertaking, in which he was conscious any man *must* fail ; but the other two gentlemen pressing him to comply, he, "*in evil hour consented,*" and gave imitations from *Benedict*. The voice was so exact as to delight the two auditors—But for Mr. Garrick ; he sat in fullen silence for half a minute, then walked across the room with an exclamation, " that egad, if, if, if that was his voice, he had never known it himself ; for, upon his soul, it was entirely dissimilar to every thing he conceived *his* to be, and totally unlike any sound that had ever struck upon his ear until that moment." So very unfair judges are we of whatever touches our own vanity, and so sore at whatever wounds our own pride,

The

The great hero of the drama, the man upon whom, if we may believe Paul Whitehead, the taste and virtue of a polished nation depended,\* could not bear to contemplate his own figure in the mirror which he often held up, and where he was delighted to view others.

Tremblingly alive, he shuddered at the shadow of ridicule, and felt as much from the apprehension of a poultry epigram by an obscure news-paper scribbler, as Foote would have done from a volume of satire against himself, with the name of Churchill in the title page.

Who would wish to possess such excess of irritability? He seriously complained Mr.

H 4

Henderson

\* "A nation's taste depends on you,

"Perhaps a nation's virtue too."

Henderfon went about the town taking him off, and that he posted him in every company.

A consciousness of his own well-earned celebrity might have furnished him with sufficient armour against such attacks, and upon many other occasions he seemed to possess this consciousness in a very high degree.

Previous to this time, Mr. Pingo, by direction of Mr. Garrick, engraved a medal, on one side of which was the manager's head. On the reverse three figures, that resembled plague, pestilence, and famine, more than what they were intended to represent, namely *the three Graces*, with this modest inscription,

“He has united all your powers.”

This



This being by a gentleman to whom Mr. Garrick had presented it, shewn to Henderson, when at my table with a number of his friends, he repeated the following little impromptu, which I think deserves the name of a good epigram.

Three squalid hags, when Pingo form'd,  
 And christen'd them the *graces* ;  
 Garrick, with Shakespeare's magic warm'd,  
 Recogniz'd soon their faces.

He knew them for the sisters weird,  
 Whose art bedimm'd the noon-tide hour,  
 And from his lips this line was heard,  
 “ *I have united all your power.*”

So Garrick, critics all agree,  
 The *graces* help'd thee to no riches,  
 And Pingo thus to flatter thee,  
 Has made *his* *graces* wishes.

So long was this great man accustomed to adulation, it became at last necessary to his dramatic existence, and so eager was he to intercept the shafts that were aimed against him, that he held up to observation what would, without his interposition, have fallen to the ground, and sunk unmarked into oblivion. This might have been the fate of the imitations, but Mr. Garrick gave some consequence to them, and the speaker, by his notice.\*

Mr. Henderson's friends had different opinions respecting the propriety of making

\* I think it was Boerhaave, who being asked, why he did not write answers to some pamphlets which were written against his medical system, replied, he thought of them as sparks upon the pages of his books, which he only had the power of blowing into a flame, but let alone they would go out of themselves.

ing Mr. Garrick his model. I have inserted two letters, in which that circumstance is mentioned, written by a gentleman who honoured him with his friendship and protection, the first season he played at Bath.

To

TO MR. HENDERSON.

*Bath, 27th June, 1773.*

DEAR HENDERSON,

IF you had not wrote to me as you did, I should have concluded you had been laid down ; pray, my boy, take care of yourself this hot weather, and don't run about London streets, fancying you are catching strokes of *nature*, at the hazard of your constitution——It was my first school, and deeply read in petticoats I am, therefore you may allow me to caution you.

Stick to Garrick as close as you can for your life : you should follow his heels like his shadow in sunshine.

No

No one can be so near him as yourself when you please, and I'm sure when he sees it strongly as other people do, he must be fond of such an *ape*. You have nothing to do now but to stick to the few great ones of the earth, who seem to have offered you their assistance in bringing you to light, and to brush off all the low ones as fast as they light upon you. —You see I hazard the appearing a puppy in your eyes, by pretending to advise you, from the real regard, and sincere desire I have of seeing you a great and happy man. —Garrick is the greatest creature living in every respect, he is worth studying in every action.—Every view and every idea of him is worthy of being stored up for imitation, and I have ever found him a generous and sincere friend. Look upon him, Henderson, with your imitative eyes, for when he drops you'll have nothing but  
 poor

poor old nature's book to look in.—You'll  
 be left to grope it out alone, scratching your  
 pate in the dark, or by a farthing candle.  
 ——Now is your time, my lively fellow  
 ——And do ye hear, don't eat so devi-  
 lishly; you'll get too fat when you rest  
 from playing, or get a sudden jogg by  
 illness to bring you down again. \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Adieu, my dear H,

believe me your's, &c,

T. G.

To Mr. HENDERSON.

*Bath, July 18, 1773.*

DEAR HENDERSON,

I F one may judge by your last spirited epistle you are in good keeping, no one eats with a more grateful countenance, or swallows with more good nature than yourself.

If this does not seem sense, do but recollect how many hard featured fellows there are in the world that frown in the midst of enjoyment, chew with unthankfulness, and seem to swallow with pain instead of pleasure ; now any one who sees you eat pig and plumb sauce, immediately *feels that pleasure* which a plump morsel,

morsel, smoothly gliding through a narrow glib passage into the regions of bliss, and moistened with the dews of imagination, naturally creates.

Some iron-faced dogs you know seem to chew dry ingratitude, and swallow discontent. Let such be kept to *under parts*, and never trusted to support a character.—In all but eating stick to Garrick;—In *that* let him stick to you, for I'll be curst if you are not his master.—Never mind the fools who talk of imitation and copying—All is imitation, and if you quit that natural likeness to Garrick which your mother bestowed upon you, you'll be flung——Ask Garrick else.

Why, sir, what makes the difference between man and man, is real performance,  
and



and not genius or conception.—There are a thousand Garrick's, a thousand Giardini's, and Fisher's, and Abels. Why only one Garrick, with Garrick's eyes, voice, &c. &c. &c? One Giardini with Giardini's fingers, &c. &c. But one Fisher with Fisher's dexterity, quickness, &c? Or more than one Abel with Abel's feeling upon the instrument? All the rest of the world are mere *bearers* and *see'ers*.

Now, as I said in my last, as nature seems to have intended the same thing in you as in Garrick, no matter how short or how long, her kind intention must not be crossed.—If it is, she will tip the wink to madam fortune, and you'll be kicked down stairs.——

“ Think on that Master Ford.”

God bless you,

I

T. G.

Mr. Garrick, however, as well as the other managers, frequently heard him rehearse both at his own house and upon the stage, treated him with polite attention, and acted with apparent kindness and good nature.

At one of these rehearsals was present Mr. George Garrick, who, being asked if he would stay and hear Mr. Henderson, said he would do himself that pleasure, *merely as a spectator*. But he found a very speedy occasion of objection, and said that in one instance it appeared to him the speaker mistook the character. Egad, my dear Brother, said Mr. Garrick, you most egregiously mistake your own character; you told us just now you would remain a *Spectator*, you forget what you are, and turn *Tatler*; but never mind,

George,

George, Mr. Henderson, whatever he is, depend upon me being the *Guardian*.

Some of the other managers deigned to think him *well enough* for Bath, but totally unfit for the boards of a London Theatre, and one of the players observed, that, "Though he appeared a meteor in the Bath *horizon*, he would be but a farthing candle in the London *hemisphere*." The gentleman's meaning I am not bound to explain, for it is not necessary for the collector of a few scattered anecdotes to be a philosopher, but I dare say many of his friends recollect the remark, for it was made in the green-room.

Flattered by such encomiums, and gratified by such testimonies of approbation from his brethren of the buskin, on the

24th of September 1774, Mr. John Henderson returned to Bath, to gather his second crop of Somersetshire laurels.

During this season he encreased his connections, strengthened his reputation, and to the characters he had already performed, added those of Zanga, Pierre, Don John, Sir John Brute, Bellville in the School for Wives, Henry the Second, Beverly in the Man of Business, Archer, Ranger, Comus, and Othello.

In the part of Othello I never saw him, but, by his own account, it was not successful ; and shall we wonder at his failure in that which eluded the grasp of Mr. Garrick. It was too mighty for him.

To Barry, the wonder working-Barry, and to him only, seemed to be given the full

full powers for exhibiting the markings of this most difficult part.

*“ But Barry’s magic cannot copied be.”*

Amongst the multitudes of candidates who have chosen to make their first appearance in this character, attracted, I believe, by its having, like Richard the Third, a sonorous sound, and giving them a power of masking their terrors under a black face, how few have tolerably succeeded.

The Moor, is conceived with all the tremendous dignity of Shakespeare, and demands a portion of that fire which illuminated the mighty master of the drama, to give him body and colouring to an audience.

Mr. Henderfon informed me, that on his first appearance in Othello, the manager had habited him in so ridiculous a garb, that he wanted nothing but the brush and scraper, to give a compleat resemblance of a chimney sweeper on May-day, and that he was certain it exceeded all power of face, to avoid smiling at least at so ludicrous a figure.

This disconcerted him so much, as to check his effusions, of which circumstance, he never so totally lost the recollection, as to appear in this character without some embarrassment.

That his want of success was not owing to his want of application, will appear by the following letter to the Bath manager ;

nager ; which should induce us to make every allowance for the errors of the performer in a new character, which he is frequently obliged to personate, without time for the proper and necessary consideration,

To Mr. PALMER, at Bath.]

London, August 3, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

I Have received Othello and your letters, to which I do not tell you that I will pay attention, but that *I am* attending to both. But it will be utterly impossible that I should come down prepared for acting those parts you mention immediately. I never did, nor ever shall repine, at the quantity, or the variety of business you employ me in, but surely it must be for your interest as well as my credit, to have me studied in the parts I am to appear in, and not to let me go on the stage in the hasty, crude, and unprepared manner I have done. Mr. Garrick says, “ he has heard that I swallowed my  
parts



parts like an eager glutton, and spewed my undigested fragments in the face of the audience." The figure is nauseous, but not more nauseous than just.

You may be assured, my dear Sir, that I have no powers, or faculties of any sort, which I would not exert in your service. I may be deficient, but indolent I will never be. I must observe to you, that a thousand incorrectnesses, hastinesses, and errors, which the people excused in my first appearance, will not be so indulgently considered the second season, and for that reason I hope you will not expect I should run through such a hasty succession of characters; and I hope too that you will consider this observation not as an idle apology for laziness, but a serious appeal to your judgment and your friendship. It is ten to one but you laugh at this, but let me assure you, upon the  
credit

credit of experience, that to keep ten or fifteen characters, of great magnitude, importance and variety, distinct and strong upon the mind and memory, is no trifling business. To learn words, indeed, is no great labour, and to pour them out no very difficult matter. It is done on our stage almost every night; but with what success, I leave you to judge. The generality of performers think it enough to learn the words, and thence all that vile uniformity and unvaried manner which disgraces the theatre.

I saw Mr. Garrick yesterday, and he has promised to go over some scenes with me on Monday next.

As for *Othello*, I tremble at it: 'tis a mighty and an arduous task; but I begin to take great pleasure in it, and will bend it  
to

to my powers, if I cannot raise them to it. But for God's sake, my dear friend, let me have time to weigh it well. Mr. Garrick assures me, he was upwards of two months rehearsing Benedict, before he could satisfy himself that he had modelled his action and recital to his own idea of the part.

You will hurt me very much, if you think I have any vain or idle motives for what I say. I do really feel that one strong and powerful idea in the mind for a while overwhelms and extrudes all others, and he who hopes to succeed in Othello, or any part of such dignity and moment, must give all his powers of thought and fancy to that, and that alone, till it is impressed upon the memory strong enough to remain unshaken by the streams of lighter images which pass it. You will laugh, as we both did, at somebody else, if I intimate, it is for the honour  
of

of your theatre that I wish to tread it with the marks of thinking, and attention, and study on me, and therefore I am content to solicit, as an indulgence to myself, that I may be allowed time to deliberate on my future characters. This I will venture to say, you will not repent agreeing to my request, for in the mind I am now in, I see so clearly the value of the reputation I hazard, that nothing can or shall divert me from the most sedulous application. As I write to the friend as well as the manager, I will add, that my industry shall have your advantage for part of its motive. I very sincerely hope Mrs. Palmer will recover her health, and you your happiness. I have a most perfect value and affection for you both, which, whether you either of you believe or not, I will ever preserve, and so God bless you.

Gainsborough

Gainfborough is a varlet, he promised me a miniature from the picture of mine, but wits and genius', if they get nothing else from the court, learn their d——d tricks of promising and forgetting. \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

You are mistaken in me. I fence almost every day, and study much, and eat little. I mean compared to your character of me. I think you had better write to Mr. Garrick about that lady. I have not seen Mrs. Greville, but have heard great things of her at Mr. G——s (the author), and from several others. I intend to go to Richmond this week.

J. H.

At

At the expiration of this second Bath season, with united testimonies of approbation from many who were deemed good judges of theatric merit, he returned to London, where he passed the few months of his recess. During this period, he frequently rehearsed, and read to Mr. Garrick, Mr. Foote\*, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Leake, but

\* At some of these rehearsals I was present, but Mr. Thomas Davies has given a description of one of them, in which he exhibits so true a picture of that most eccentric character, the late Sam Foote, that I hope I shall be pardoned for inserting it.

“ Before Henderson left London, he was advised to try if Mr. Foote would not give him an opportunity of shewing himself at his theatre in the Haymarket. Two friends accompanied him to North End. Our modern Aristophanes welcomed the visitants with great civility; but such is the volatility of his genius, that it was not possible to announce the errand immediately: he must be permitted

but his fate was to find all of them,  
 “ Damn with faint praise.”

It

permitted to indulge his peculiar humour, and to let off a few voluntaries, before he could be induced to hear of any business whatsoever. Foote's imagination is so lively, and his conceptions so rapid, as well as exuberant, that his conversation is a cataract, or torrent of wit, humour, pleasantry, and satire. The company had scarce unfolded their business, when he gave them the history of Sir Gregory Grinwell and Lady Barbary Bramble. The whimsical situations into which he put his characters with his lively and farcastic remarks, threw the company into convulsions of laughter.

“ However, Henderson's friends thought it was now time to stop the current of Mr. Foote's vivacities, by informing him of the reason of their visit. One of them took the lead :—

“ Sir, our young friend, the Bath Roscius, would think himself extremely happy to have the opinion of so acknowledged a judge of theatrical merit as you are ;  
 he

It was, however, the earnest wish of his friends, that he should appear upon the  
London

he wishes you would permit him to rehearse a scene of a play."

"Well, Sir, what are you for, the sock or the buskin? I'll be hanged if you are not quite enamoured of that bouncing brimstone Tragedy."—Mr. Henderson is not confined, Sir, to either.—"Stick to the sock, young gentleman; the one is all nature, and the other all art and trick. Tragedy is mere theatrical bombast, the very fungus of the theatre. Come, Sir, give us a taste of your quality."—Here Henderson began a speech in Hamlet; when Foote, turning round to one of the company, said, "Have you not heard in what manner this impudent little scoundrel has treated me?"—"I protest, Sir, I don't know whom you mean."—"No, where have you left your apprehension? Let me but tell you what a damned trick he served me lately, by lending me a large sum of money."—"Consider, my dear Sir, the time grows late, and we are to dine in town."—"No, no," said Foote, "you shall dine with me upon a stewed



London stage, and try if the public would be more indulgent than the directors of their amusements ;

a stewed rump of beef, and a dish of fish." Now Mr. Henderson begins. Well, once more he endeavoured to open, when behold, an unlucky joke, *a petite histoire*, some droll thought, or some unaccountable idea, prevented the disconcerted actor from displaying his powers of elocution : his case was now become extremely pitiable.

However, after hearing this singular genius read an act of his new comedy, take off Lady Betty Biggamy, recite the whole trial of himself and George Faulkener, ridicule the Irish Lord Chief Justice Robinson, for condemning his Peter Paragraph for a libel, speak a Prologue in the character of Peter, laugh at our most celebrated orators of the bar, mimic the members of both Houses of Parliament, tell some ludicrous stories of Captain Bodens and the Irish chairman, Henderson was permitted to repeat, without interruption, Mr. Garrick's Prologue, which he spoke on his first appearance, after his arrival from the Continent. This being no caricature,

amusements ; but this step he himself was not very earnest to take, unless he could be received upon terms, which it was not very easy to procure. By *terms*, I do not mean salary ; that was not the principal object, but

cature, but a genuine and fair representation of the great Roscius's manner, without the least exaggeration, we cannot be surpris'd that it did not make any impressiion upon Mr. Foote ; however, he paid the speaker a compliment upon the goodness of his ear. Dinner was now announced ; every thing was princely, and in splendid order. Wit flew about the table : I mean Mr. Foote's ; for I would advise every man that has any wit of his own, who shall have the honour to dine with this gentleman, to bottle it up for another occasion ; for he is himself master of enough, and to spare, for ten companies. I need not observe that many portraits were drawn, and some of them in a masterly stile.

When Henderson took his leave of him, he whispered one of the company in the ear, "*that he would not do.*" Mr. Foote confirmed the death-warrant that had been already signed by *Garrick, Colman, Harris, and Leake.*

but exemption from being forced upon characters for which he was unqualified, in which his consequent failure would have blighted his budding honours, and sunk him into the obscurity he so much dreaded. Somewhat chagrined at the reception which had been given him by the monarchs of the theatre, in September, 1774, he returned to Bath.

That his mortification had not wholly subdued his pleasantry, appears from the following letter, which he wrote a few days previous to his leaving London, to a friend who was then at Margate.

To Mr. I——.

*London, Sept. 21, 1774.*

A S there is an exprefs coming to thee, I fhall write, otherwife it would not have been worth thy while to have paid a groat for what thou haft fo often paid for before, and that is my love. I hope thou art become an inhabitant of the deep waters by this time, and wilt give me an account of the vegetation of coral, and the venereal amufements of fharks and lampreys ;—fay nothing to the women, but tell me privately, whether the porpoife hath that amorous alacrity which the fat ones of the earth fo much wonder at, and whether there be any fuch thing as conjugal fidelity among the herrings and the lobfters of the ocean. As for the reft, thanks for the draft, which I fhall not ufe,  
because

because foreseeing that the waves would cling longer about your waist than you at first imagined, I applied to your friend H.

Adieu,

J. HENDERSON.

P. S. I set out from your house for Bath on Sunday morning. My week's business is as follows: Monday, Hamlet; Tuesday, Benedict; Wednesday, Belville.

His reception at Bath was in the highest degree gratifying. Men, to whose decisions the world paid implicit obedience, distinguished his talents, invited him to their tables, and admitted him as the companion of their festive hours, where his easy humour and lively pleasantry ensured him a most welcome reception. But this pleasantry was not sufficiently guarded. In the hours of merriment and laughter, he was often asked for imitations, and Mr. Garrick being the *Magnus Apollo* of the drama, whose actions were obvious to all, and of whose manners no one was ignorant, Mr. Henderson was frequently requested to exhibit him. The inconveniences he had formerly felt had not taught him caution; he continued the same practice, and with more accuracy than prudence, gave the little stories of the day, and entered so forcibly into the manner of that great man, that every

every hearer was struck with the resemblance. This was a freedom Mr. Garrick could not forgive. For a young theatrical adventurer, upon a country stage, and consequently dependant upon him for an introduction to Drury-lane, to make *his* peculiarities the object of imitation, was a sin never to be forgiven, and perhaps one source of the difficulties he found, in his attempts at an introduction to a London theatre.

At Bath he, however, encreased his dramatic reputation, and performed in either play or farce, four or five times a week. He added to his list of characters, amongst many others, those of Ford, Posthumus, Shylock, Lorenzo in the Spanish Friar, Sciolto, and Morcar in Matilda,

Many of his friends thought he was wasting that time at Bath which might be

employed with more advantage to his purse, and without hazard to his reputation, in London ; but he himself reasoned somewhat differently, and, in this instance, evinced, that a cautious prudence, a quick eye to what constituted his own interest, and a persevering judgment to pursue it, were strong *traits* in his character.

The newspapers of the day gave a very serious recital of this business, with all the dignity of history, and all the air of authority ; but as these grave writers were not perfectly masters of *data* on which to ground their arguments, they have censured him for errors of which he was not guilty, and defended motives by which he was not actuated.

His



His own reasonings may, I should apprehend, best appear from his own letters, written to different friends, with whom he then lived in habits of the most unreserved confidence.

To

To Mr. I——,

*Bath, October 24th, 1772.*

MY MOST DEAR FRIEND,

DON'T think me careless of your advice, or of my own affairs, because I did not write to you by return of the post. The importance of the matter, made still more important by your interference, resolved me to think most deliberately and attentively on it, before I formed my conclusions.—I have now, I think, considered it amply, and compared the advantages with the hazards—you will be convinced, that no *money interests* have influence on my decisions, when I tell you, that I have resolved to stay here some time longer.—“What has then?” you will ask.  
—Reputation,

—Reputation.—“ Reputation, say you, my good friend, why that will be lost in Bath, and London will establish it.” I think not so, and I will tell you why. Notwithstanding I have played forty parts here, there are not more than five or six which I dare offer to a London audience, on account of the fame I *have* acquired.—So small a number will not carry me through a season, and if they would, I could not have them to myself, because I should not be allowed to keep even those parts, as it is a rule in London, not to dispossess any performer of those characters which he is thought in any degree to deserve to support.—I must then be forced upon others in which I have no merit, or none that will support the name I have got, and you would have the mortification to see your friend sinking into insignificance, and living a kind of rent-charge upon the Theatre,

atre,

atre. No advantage of *benefit* whatever would compensate *that*. The reasons I give for staying here, are, I think, powerful ones. I am not ripe enough for London, and what a fool of a gardener would he be who should send a basket of *green* peaches to market, when, if he had stayed a little while longer, he might have sent them ripened and rich flavoured. “*A foolish figure, but farewell it, for I will use no art.*”——You Jack, and myself, and all my friends, have mistaken my talents—we used to think that their liveliness and vigour would force them into reputation, but I find now that they require the most sedulous correction—In short, I must study, and I will make this place my college, ’till I have brought my talents to be much more like perfection than they are at present, that you and the rest  
of

of my friends need not blush at the encomiums you have either silently, or openly, bestowed upon me. If you was to see me play Hamlet now, you would scarce know it to be the same person you saw before, and those who *do* see it *now*, will, I hope, soon be convinced that they shall see it still better. It is a real truth, that I feel my mind enlarges, and my powers invigorate very sensibly—you'll say, would they not do the same in London?—I answer, *no*. The continual practice I am in here is of great advantage to me—I once thought it an hardship to be forced upon so many characters, I think so now no longer, being convinced that almost every part I play, however unsuited to my nature, and however ill I may appear in it, does me good ; in London it would do me harm ; for this reason : there are com-  
puted

puted to be *thirty* different audiences in London, here there are but *two* at the utmost, and those of them who see me to a disadvantage one night, see me to advantage the *next*.—I appeal to the world whether I am losing myself here.

As to salary, that will be raised, and Palmer has told me, that a bank-note of fifty pounds is ready for me, when I please, for my services last year. I will soon convince you, my kindest friend, that I want no money—It is true that I have not any, but consider, I am a student—when I have gone through my classes, and can give a good translation of Shakespeare to the world I will publish it, and I will present you with a copy, bound and gilt, if not lettered, in as good a calves-skin as I can procure.

Adieu,

Adieu——I will reply to the other parts of your letter when I have more leifure.

J. HENDERSON.

To

To Mrs. I——

*Bath, 22d December, 1774.*

I AM fure by your letter that it was written in the very fpirit of friendship, and I have not been more gratified a great while than in reading it. I thank you moft earneftly for your concern and attention to my interefts: to fhew you what confidence I have in your fincerity and *fécrefy*, (though the foolifh world will not allow that virtue to your fex) I will explain to you more private and perfonal reafons for my not being eager to come to London, than I have written to E——, or to my deareft J——. They are not for the world to know, and E—— and Jack may fhew  
my



my letters to them, to all the world, *by my choice.*

You are to know then that I think Mr. Garrick has acted very *illiberally* and *ungentlemanly* in my regard.—I will tell you *how*. Mr. C——d sent to me the other morning, after my playing Benedict, to compliment and applaud me. He told me that he was astonished at my performance, that Mr. Garrick had prepared him for a very different opinion.—Mr. C——d then shewed me a letter from him, wherein he says, “ See Henderson more than once, and give me your real opinion of him.”——Mr. C——d did so, and that opinion was the most kind and favourable that could be imagined. Yet Mr. G—— took no manner of notice of it, though he constantly wrote to Mr. C——d. Mr. Garrick then

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tampers

tampers with E——, whom you know the honour of being thought of Mr. Garrick's counsel would incline to any thing, *He* immediately tells Jack and my friends what a favourable opportunity there is for me, and they, eager to serve me, think I should jump at it. Mr. Garrick, then, to use a scripture phrase, “ *Ploughs with my beifer.* ”——Now the scheme appears to me thus in Mr. G——'s plan.—— Let Henderson be tempted by his friends, and by his own ambition, to come to London, he will then *apply to me*, and I can make my own conditions, he will then be considered as one whom I patronize, and protect; whereas if I apply to *him*, he will make conditions with *me*, and from my acknowledging the *want* of him, I cannot have him at my *beck*.

I did

I did not however swallow the bait so greedily as was imagined; and the consequence is that Mr. George Garrick has applied to me, but for the reasons I have written my dear I——, I declined his offer. When I talk of conditions, I desire to be understood, my friend, that I do not mean *pecuniary* ones, if they had been my object I should not stay *here*. To give you still farther proof that they are not, Mr. C——d told me the other night, that he was ashamed of the part Mr. Garrick had acted in this affair, and that he would undertake to get me whatever terms I pleased at Covent-Garden, which, he added, was the house I must think of whenever I came to London. \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*. He wishes too, he says, that I would not make my engagement for so long as *three*

*years*, but I ought not to regard that, because *if I make myself of real importance*, the forfeiture of my articles will be no impediment to my leaving Bath, and if I do not make myself of real importance, neither you nor any real friend will wish to see me there.

As to posting Mr. Garrick, I have explained the whole affair to George Garrick, who was satisfied, and Palmer wrote to Mr. G. to take the whole fault upon himself, if there was any fault. So that Mr. Garrick cannot be displeased with me. \* \* \* \* \*

——I hope a little time will convince you that I am right.

Mr. C——d behaves to me with remarkable complaisance and respect, and last night, after my playing Shylock, he  
came

came to me, and said that he was sorry he could not stay here long enough to interest himself at my benefit, that he should regret leaving Bath without giving some instance of the respect he had for my genius, and return for the pleasure it had given him, he therefore offered me a new Tragedy for my benefit, if I thought it would advantage me.

Since this is a letter of private sentiments, you must allow me to indulge a little vanity, and please myself with telling you, that Lord N——m, a nobleman who commands the taste of a numerous party of literati, and of wits, &c. came behind the scenes to me last night, with two other gentlemen, to thank me for my Shylock, and his lordship was pleased to say, it was the most finished piece of acting he ever saw, and that it far exceeded Macklin's.

In one word——if I thought I should never be a better actor than I am, I would not hesitate to be in London, but I will endeavour to make myself respectable and important before I come.

I hope, my very dear friend, that you see my conduct and my reasoning in a right point of view, and I flatter myself there is some resolution and firmness in my mind, since I can resist so alluring a temptation, and

*“ Stick to poverty with peace of mind.”*

Declamations, are often and reasonably suspected of having no other motive than the glitter of period, or the loftiness of language, but I *act*, as well as argue.

God

God blefs you, my good girl, I have written to an immeafureable length, but I would have you poffeffed of my rea- fons for the feeming negligence of my conduct in this affair.

J. HENDERSON.

L 4

To

To Mr. I——.

*Bath, Dec. 26, 1774.*

SOMEHOW or other, my dear Jack, neither you nor Mrs. I—— see this affair right. In the first place, Garrick did not desire E——s to bid me make my own proposal, or if he did, E——s did not explain that to me. These are his words—“ I saw Mr. Garrick this afternoon ; we talked of you. He asked me, if you wished to play the ensuing winter at Drury-lane, and if so, why you did not write to him ; that if you two could agree, “ *he was ready to engage you.*”

In the next place, ye are wrong in supposing that Mr. George Garrick *called on me ; he did not.* I met him in the street,  
and



and that morning a paragraph had appeared in the Bath papers concerning my having resolved to renew my engagements here. Mr. George Garrick's words to me, after the first salutations, were, as nearly as I can recollect: " I had a letter from my brother, desiring me to call upon you, and hear if you had any thing to propose for the next winter, but as I see by the papers you have engaged again here, *it is very well.*" I replied, that I had not signed articles, but that I had almost promised Mr. Palmer to stay with him, because I thought this a very proper *school* for me—I then explained to him the nature of the mistake about *posting* his brother, and we parted.

I wonder you can think *I bear myself too high*, when I consent to stay here a poor provincial, when I might be at a  
 theatre

theatre in London. I can quote as well as you :

———" *Thou keep'st me from the light.*"

Again,

" *I'm sharing spoil before the field is won ;*

" *Clarence still breathes, Edward still lives and reigns,*

" *When they are gone, then must I count my gains.*"

I have this morning had conversation with Mr. Cumberland ; he advises me to engage here, but only to engage from year to year—he promises to procure me an engagement at either theatre, equal to that of *Smith*, or *Reddish*, or *Lee*. The only dread I have, is, that of being put upon inferior characters—'till Garrick leaves the stage, I *must* at his theatre. There is more in the possession of characters than you seem to think. Mr. G. Garrick himself told Mr. C——d, that I should have *two trial parts*, but they afterwards

afterwards must devolve to their present possessors. Do only, my beloved friend, think what I must do *then*.

You know, whilst you urge the *town* as a reason to me, that the town do not interfere. How was *Lee*, whom you will allow to have merit, and who *had* more than he *has*, I believe; how, I say, was he forced upon insignificant parts? I have seen his name in the bills for *Don John*, in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

What is urged as to my being under Mr. Garrick's directions, with regard to improvement, is a very powerful argument with me not to be with him. I have been this two years labouring to lose the resemblance of him, which had like to have ruined me for ever, and stamped me with the disgrace of mimicry, and now if I was  
with

with him, I should *re*-gain all that would confirm that character to the world, and in my best of praise should be called a very good *copy*. I shall see Mr. C——d after the play this evening, and then I will write more. I shall stipulate with Palmer, that I will play only on such nights as the company, I mean the gentry, are expected, and to relinquish some certain characters, and only to engage from year to year. It is the opinion of my Lord Newnham, and many of my friends of that rank in life, that I ought not to go to London while Garrick is there.

I am but just beginning to be talked of—  
—Parties will, in time, be made in my favour by people of *rank* and *power*, but it must be done by time—the protection and the influence of five or six noblemen, will avail me more than any thing ; however, I  
have

have commissioned Mr. C——d to negotiate for me, so far as to know Mr. Garrick's real intentions towards me, but on no terms whatever will I consent to be liable to insignificant characters. You cannot, my dear Jack, you cannot imagine, how soon I might be ruined in London, if I am in the power of those who meditate my ruin—for God's sake, only consider what an irrecoverable shock it would be to be obliged to return to Bath, or to lay at the back of the theatre on a salary of *bounty* more than merit. As to Mr. Garrick's patronage and friendship, I have no right to expect it. If Mr. G—— had meant to patronize me, he would have done it at *first*, and not have sent me to this place, which, though it was as prudent a measure as could be planned for me, I really believe Mr. Garrick *did not consider*. My reasons for this belief, are, that he constantly speaks in my discredit, to  
those

those whom he ever speaks to at all about me. A circumstance which you should consider maturely *as I have done*. The case is simply this : I *have* great merit, or I *have not*. If I have, it should entitle me to a respectable consideration. If I have *not*, I ought not to be seen in London, and lose the fame I have there. Oh ! but say you and Mrs. I——, “ Shandy, why will you be so proud, there is a second rate fame and profit in the theatre, with which you should be content as yet ”—I do not think so. ———“ Th’ aspiring blood of Lancaster has not sunk in the ground.”† My talents  
are

† The letter, to which this is an answer, began with the following quotation :—

——“ What !

“ Will th’ aspiring blood of Lancaster sink in the ground ?

“ I thought it would have mounted.”

are not of that cast ; though I have acquired great reputation in *Richard*, I should make a very insignificant figure in his good cousin of Buckingham. Hamlet too would support *me*, but I could never support *Horatio*, and so on.

J. H.

T.

To Mr. I———.

*Bath, Jan. 2, 1775.*

DEAR FRIEND,

IN consequence of the letter I told you I wrote to Mr. Garrick, upon which subject also Mr. Taylor wrote, Mr. Garrick writes thus to Mr. Taylor.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I received last night a letter from you,  
“ and another from Mr. Henderson, upon  
“ the same subject—I shall therefore beg,  
“ that this answer to you may serve for both.  
“ In my opinion, your proposal would be  
“ a very injurious one to Mr. Henderson—  
“ can he or you believe, that his playing  
“ only



“ only twice, a different character too each  
 “ time, would give the public a proper idea  
 “ of his merit ?——The diffidence and ap-  
 “ prehension, natural to a performer of feel-  
 “ ing, might make him incapable of shew-  
 “ ing his talents and powers the first time  
 “ upon a new stage, and upon which the  
 “ great and established estimate must be  
 “ put upon his merit ; should his fears  
 “ prevail too much, which are ever strongest  
 “ with actors of keenest sensibility, he  
 “ might be essentially hurt—could Mr.  
 “ H. have an opportunity of performing  
 “ ten or twelve different characters, his ge-  
 “ nius would have fair play, otherwise, as  
 “ his well-wisher, I protest against the  
 “ other scheme.      \*            \*            \*            \*

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

M

“ If

“ If Mr. H. chuses to be with me,  
 “ why should he not chuse three parts,  
 “ Hamlet, Shylock, Benedick, or what he  
 “ pleases to appear in next season, and to  
 “ have elbow room to display all his tra-  
 “ gick and comick powers. I will either  
 “ come into *certain* terms with him, or  
 “ *conditional*, as he and his friends please.  
 “ I can say no more, or offer any thing  
 “ fairer, or more for his interest.—I pro-  
 “ test against the other partial manner of  
 “ trial, which can be of no service to the  
 “ manager, and may be of great prejudice  
 “ Mr. Henderson.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

D. GARRICK.”

Now, Jack, you know as much of the matter as I do.—What shall I do?—What propofals shall I make, and what answer shall I give?—You know very well, and fo do all my friends, that the fpirit of my defign to ftay in Bath was to make myfelf mafter of fuch a *number of principal characters*, as would fecure me from the danger of being employed in insignificant or improper ones; by *improper*, I mean fuch, as however important or reputable, do not come within the compafs of my abilities; fuch for inftance is Romeo, &c.—By being put into either, I conceive the little fame I have got would be ruined, and I fhould be in a much worfe fituation than if I had never ventured upon the ftage. Mr. Garrick's letter indeed now feems to open me a fecurity from that danger, and in my own mind I would leave to him *all other terms*, than thofe of *choofing my characters*.

I care not how often I play, but Mr. Garrick may be led in his candour to imagine, I have succeeded in more characters than I really have.—Do, my dear Jack, lay this before my friends, and *consult and determine for me*. I say this not because I think your own decision insufficient, but because I hate to write the same letters to different people—there you see I have the honour to resemble Mr. Garrick.

J. H.

To

To Mr. I——.

*Bath, January 23, 1775.*

AS I find that lady has told you some circumstances about my negotiation with Mr. Garrick, I now send you more. I wrote, indeed, by the very next post, to desire her not to acquaint you with any part of it 'till she heard farther from me, because I had a letter from Mr. C——d, which seemed to open a new negotiation. I have not time to copy it here, but its purport was, that *he* wished the *past differences* might be forgot, and the curtain dropped; I wrote in answer, that “ I was very willing to forget all that had past, but that supposing the curtain *was* dropped, the power of raising it, and opening a new scene of negotiation, was not in *me*; that, if through Mr. Cumberland's

M 3

means,

means, or by Mr. Garrick's own directions, any propofals were made to me, I would give a speedy and direct answer."

In confequence of this, I this morning received a letter, written by Mr. Garrick to Mr. C——d, wherein he fays :—

“ I cannot alter my opinion of Mr. H——n's propofals, but I fay no more of them ; — you feem to wifh he fhould make his appearance upon our ftage—As I have not feen him act, and cannot guefs at his merit, which is fo variously fpoken of, I will agree that Mr. Henderfon fhall perform any two parts at the beginning of next feafon, which he fhall pleafe to fix upon, and afterwards upon others that we fhall both agree upon. After he has performed ten or twelve times, and the public voice will be known, two gentlemen, one choſen  
by

by him, and one by me, shall fix upon his salary for the season ; but, upon their disagreement, a third may be called in, and he must determine the difference.

“ To make something certain for Mr. Henderson and the referees to go upon, suppose we agree that his salary shall not be less than *five* pounds a week, nor more than *ten*, for the season, with a benefit. After his salary is fixed, he must become like the other performers, subject to my management *wholly*.”

It will not be necessary to copy Mr. C——d's letter to me—he advises the scheme, and thinks I shall be *safe in the experiment*.

Now, my dear Jack, you must know, that *five* pounds a week in London, is not

much more than *four* pounds here, because *we* are paid every week, from the beginning of our season 'till the end of it, alike; whereas in London, *all Lent*, and during those weeks in which the house is open only *three nights* in the week, the pay is but *half*.—Observe, that Garrick only proposes to engage me one year, and at the end of that he might disgrace or lower me at his pleasure. If I stay with Palmer, I engage for *three years*, and have three guineas a week—besides the advantage of the improvement that constant acting of capital parts must unavoidably give me.

Mr. Taylor is now in London, and I have just had a letter from him, wherein he says, after having seen Mr. Garrick play, “ Depend upon it you will be received whenever Garrick retires from the stage, with great *eclat*; I am more convinced of that *now* than



than ever. It will not do for you to attempt rising on the stage as they do in the army and navy, by seniority; you must come out at once a comet, and not be content with appearing as a twinkling star, liable to be obscured by every little cloud that flies before you. To drop the metaphor, your talents must be so well improved and ripened, that any slight imperfections will be instantly overlooked, and your friends, the judges and true critics, be able to bear down the ill-natured remarks which will always attend true merit."

I am sure, my most dear, my most worthy friend, I shall impose a grateful task upon you, when I beg you to visit Mr. Taylor at his brother's house, and talk the matter over with him. I shall write by this post to prepare him for your visit, and afterwards  
 send

send me with all the speed you can, your opinion and advice.

You can have no conception of the anxiety of my mind in this affair. I dread London, I dread Garrick, I dread myself.

I trust you with all the vanities of my heart, and will therefore send you the beginnings of those letters I made to you. You will see by their dates how I addressed you. There is no time, no hour hardly, in which I do not think of you with the sincerest and most solicitous regard.

God bless you—I have not time to correct what I have written.

J. HENDERSON.

With

With Henderson's conduct, in the course of the foregoing transactions, Mr. Garrick was highly offended ; accused him of an insolent attempt to usurp his province, take the management out of his hands, and dictate such terms as no actor of the most established reputation had ever presumed to offer. This accusation Mr. Henderson warmly disclaimed ; declaring, that the only motives which influenced him, were, that attention to his own fame which every man ought to preserve, and that attention to his own safety which the frequent conduct of managers to performers, gave some reason for ; and which his duty to a public, who had honoured him by their approbation, to his friends, who had distinguished him by their partiality, and to himself, fully justified. This reasoning had no effect upon Mr. Garrick, and the hopes of an engagement at Drury-lane, were for the present wholly

wholly given up. But one of his friends, wishing him in a situation where his talents would have the encouragement they deserved, made application to Mr. Harris, who appeared pleased at the overture, and eager to engage him, which Henderson being informed, offered his services upon the same terms which had been prescribed by Mr. Garrick, and received for answer, that if he had any thoughts of continuing with Mr. Palmer, the London manager would by no means, come between them, whatever might be the eventual advantage to Covent-garden Theatre, and without waiting for an answer from Henderson, though he might possibly have heard from his friend Mr. Palmer, absolutely declined entering into any treaty with him, let the result of the Bath business, then pending, be what it would.

This

This seemed to bar the door of Covent-garden Theatre, and his first determination was to quit Bath, and pass a few months in France; but a prudent attention to his own interest, and the consequent timidity of mind, which dreaded being without an engagement, operated so far, that he entered into a new agreement with the Bath manager.

To

To Mrs. I——

*Bath, 24th Feb. 1775.*

D I D not my narrative inform you that I had positively refused staying with P——  
——If you have not observed it then, I do assure you now that *I have*. I sent it him in writing, and I will hold my promise to you and my friends,

I have not the least doubt but P——r hath obstructed my engagement at Covent-Garden,

“ And will no doubt with reasons answer it,

“ For Brutus is an *honourable man*,

“ So are they *all, all honourable men.*”

I certainly

I certainly will do as you advise, and I think myself very happy that I have such counsellors as I cannot oppose without forfeiting all discretion, or good sense. —This is a strange turned phrase, but I take as much pains to avoid writing in a strain of compliment to you, as some would to affect it, not because *I* think that civility and truth can be seldom united, for there again *you* act so that there is no separating them, but that I would not have you hum over those parts of my letter as careless as you do those of any other person, who celebrates your wit or your good sense, or your good nature, which I know you always think it better to *possess* than to hear of.

Here you may take a pinch of snuff.

I am

I am advised, on all hands, to pass this ensuing summer in France, in order to steal their receipt for making *incense*, and other materials, which, on my return, I may use on my theatrical altar, and make a solemn sacrifice to the *Graces*. This I shall certainly do; for though I know very well that all the ingredients may be bought in London, and cheaper too, than in France, yet I consider myself as a merchant who must obey the commissions of his correspondents, and send them whatever they demand from whatever shore they direct.

I assure you, my dear friend, that ever since I gave P——r a positive answer, my mind has been in constant serenity and composure.—I mean in all regards of future engagements, and I constantly reply, when any friends ask me how I can be so weak  
as



as to throw myself out of all employment, that I must take my chance, and I say it with most unaffected indifference.

Pray have you seen my picture at Gainfborough's yet.—If not, why don't you go? —I intend it for my dearest Jack, because I think it very like, and he who hath known my heart for so many years, hath the best title to my resemblance.

I wish you had seen me play Hamlet the other night.—*Vanity!*—Oh, you simpleton!—It was because I should have seen *you here*.

If you make any more excuses about your writing, I will cut them out of your letters, for they have no business there, and send them back—besides every excuse is an intruder, and takes up that room,

N

which

which I can prove by the other parts of your letters, would have contained much good humour and kindness and good writing, by which it is manifest you have cheated me ; and it is an aggravation of your crime, that you have singled me out to impose upon from a large circle of people, who are all ready to swear that you never acted otherwise to them than with the most upright integrity. I repeat, that it is particularly cruel and unjust in you to treat me so, who am, as much as any of them can be for their souls,

Your very sincere and faithful,

J. HENDERSON

During the summer of 1775 he performed with Mr. Reddish at Bristol, where from the accidental indisposition of a performer, he on the seventeenth of August played Falstaff, a character which nature seemed to have forbade by every external disqualification. But the difficulty increased the honour, and success justified the undertaking.

It would degrade his memory, to compare him with any one who ever personated this *mountain of delight*, except Mr. Quin, who appeared mentally and corporeally formed for the character.

The first play I ever saw was Henry the Fourth, when Quin performed Falstaff, it being, I think, the last time he ap-

peared on the stage, for the benefit of Mr. Ryan.

Of his playing I have not any recollection, but in the scene of the battle, instead of the stump of a tree on which Falstaff sits to rest himself, I remember the then directors of the Theatre introduced a crimson velvet arm chair, with gilt claw feet and blue fringe.

I have been told by those who have a perfect remembrance of the veteran's performance, that it was more important, but less pleasant than Henderson's, who had also the superiority in the soliloquies, but that where the old knight assumes dignity, Quin's surly humour was beyond competition.

In the summer of 1776, he played under the management of Mr. Yates at Birmingham, and here first saw that meteor of the drama, Mrs. Siddons, who, the preceding season, had performed *Portia*, *Lady Anne*, and a few other characters at Drury-Lane, but with so little *eclat*, that upon Mr. Garrick's retiring, the succeeding managers not thinking her merits equal to a very trifling salary, she was discharged for inability !!!

Of her talents Mr. Henderson entertained the most exalted opinion, and wrote to Mr. Palmer, recommending him in the strongest terms to engage her, but he having already a person under articles, who had a similar cast of characters, the recommendation was at that time without effect. Yet, who that has seen Mrs. Siddons, will withhold their sanction to Mr. Henderson's judgment.

It may be almost said of her, that, *as an actress*, she has all the various merit which was possessed by any daughter of the tragic muse who ever trod the English stage, and all the various merit which they wanted.

At the commencement of the season he returned to Bath; a critique upon his performance, under the signature of the London Rider, appearing in the Morning Chronicle, he notices it in the following letter.

To

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To the Rev. Mr. D——.

*Bath, November 7th, 1776.*

DEAR FRIEND,

I T H A N K you very heartily for your letter; it confirms me in all that I have thought of your candour and your friendship, which I have loved and honoured ever since I was capable of loving and honouring any thing as I ought.—I wonder you should think I was abused by the *London Rider*, who, whatever his intentions may be, has paid me the highest compliment.—His objections to me were, that I imitated Garrick in *Sciolto*, and imitated him in the worst parts, his guttural sounds, &c. Now it is certain I never saw Garrick

in Sciolto, and if I had, that thickness and feebleness he complains of were not improper for the *age* of Sciolto.—The Rider doth not complain of those defects in Comus, in Lorenzo, in Falstaff, which certainly are not like Garrick's manner. He only finds that they are, where I think they ought to be, in an old and distressed man.—He finds indeed that I have not dignity—he finds also that I have not gentility enough for the gay Lorenzo, whom Elvira is to fall in love with at the first sight, though I think he allows me some portion of ease and sprightliness.—He finds also that I have not an eye for the jocund and voluptuous Falstaff—I cannot help it, but I have, without vanity, just such an eye as the *Poet* has assigned that character —“ Do you set down your name in the “ scrawl of youth,” says the Chief Justice to Falstaff, “ that are written down *old*,  
with



with all the characters of age?—Have you not a *moist* eye?—a dry hand?—a yellow cheek?—a white beard?—a decreasing leg?—an encreasing belly? &c. &c. &c.”——I believe by a *moist* eye is not there meant, that sparkling fluid which lends an appearance of penetration, and which gives point and expression.

But I am contented to want these requisites he says I have not, as long as I am thought to possess those he allows me——But the London Rider should not decide so pointedly that I had better stay where I am—he has not seen many characters in which I succeed better than in those four he did see.

I have played, Doctor, since I have been upon the stage, which you know is only  
four

four years, upwards of *seventy* characters, and most of them of the first importance, both for character and magnitude.—Judge if my faculties have not been pretty well stretched, and judge if I have not a claim to some indulgence on that score — I know you will be apt to say, it were better to have matured half a dozen, than to have run through such a number in the crude and hasty manner I must necessarily have done;—to which I answer, that this was not in my power. The people here will have variety, and our company is so limited, that the leaders in it are obliged to furnish out that variety from themselves; nor do I believe, that in the end it will hurt me. I wish Mr. Woodfall had chosen any other name to pay me his compliments in, than that of THE LONDON RIDER.

To use the language of Pistol,

“ Shall pack-horses,

“ And hollow-pamper’d jades of Asia,

“ Which cannot go but thirty miles a day,

“ Compare with Cæsars, and with cannibals,

“ And Trojan Greeks ?”

I sincerely hope, my dear friend, that your happiness is secure, that Mrs. D—— and all your family are in health, and that they will continue so, as I am really interested in every thing that concerns you. Let me hear from you, and believe me truly,

Your’s, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

The

The idea of playing at London was now at an end, except some fortunate accident should give him an introduction ; and this accident happened when it was least expected.

Mr. Colman having, in 1777, purchased from Mr. Foote the Patent of the Haymarket Theatre, engaged Henderson as a performer, upon terms which will appear by the following letter.

To

To Mr. I——.

*January 8, 1777.*

DEAR I——,

I HAVE agreed with Colman, and shall be at the Haymarket in the summer.

I am to play only my best characters, and I am to have an hundred pounds; besides, Colman has promised me his interest with the Chamberlain, to procure me a benefit after his patent closes, which, if I can compass, will be a very great thing for me; but I depend not upon that. I shall play Shylock first, I believe, but there is time enough to determine that—You can't conceive how I am in favour here—I

was

was at a masquerade last week, and got great credit.

Oh, Garrick and I are almost reconciled ; he has recommended me to Drury-lane. You may almost be sure of my being at one of the theatres in London, when my time is out here. I do not yet repent my conduct, nor have I reason ; but more hereafter.

My love to all your *familé*.

Your's, sincerely,

J. H.

To

To Mr. I——.

*Bath, Feb. 12, 1777.*

MY DEAR I——,

I HAVE just had my benefit, very brilliant, very crouded, and the best I have ever made in this place. I played Leon. I agree very much with you about Shylock; I will not make my first appearance in it, if I can prevail with Colman to alter his opinion, and I shall write to him for that purpose. However, it is proper that you should know what that opinion was, and how it was grounded. He says, my manner of playing it is different enough from Macklin's to excite enquiry and examination, and he payed me the compliment to add, that he thought me sufficiently grounded in the author to justify such deviations, or differences,

ferences, as there was from Macklin. He added also, that to make people talk and argue, and dispute, was what he aimed at, and seemed to be certain, that if he could do that, my reputation would be established by it. Now, though this is plausible and flattering to me, I think with you, that the popular spirit is too strong to be contested with at present, and therefore I propose, in my own mind, to begin more humbly, and rise, if I can, by degrees. I have made a figure lately in *Valentine*, in *Love for Love*, and *Oakley* in the *Jealous Wife*, and *Leon*. I will play as little tragedy as possible in the summer, for more reasons than one. The chief is, that I do not think myself ripe enough in the high tragic line ; and another reason is, that tragedy will never be followed in the dog-days, except some extraordinary planet of attraction appears ; and if I am neglected, I am ruined. I will play

*Hamlet,*



*Hamlet*, and *Richard the Third*, and *Shylock*, and perhaps *John*.

I am now studying *Henry the Fifth*, which, if I can make answerable to my present ideas of it, I may perhaps add to them, and I think no more. I shall have infinite variety and scope in comedy, such as *Falstaff*, *Bays*, *Don John*, *Benedick*, *Leon*, *Oakley*, *Valentine*, *Felix*, &c. &c.

*Richard the Second* was once revived, but the town would not bear it; there are no women in it, and the whole play demands the finest acting to make it pleasing. By the next post I shall take up the hundred pound note I gave your brother H——. Have not I been a good œconomist, and I have paid near fifty pounds to J——n.

O

I am

I am happy to hear so well of Mortimer ; I do love that varlet ; I hope he will continue as true to his own genius as that will be to him. I hope too, that Gainsborough will let you have my head—don't you think it a very fine likeness.

My mother desires her best wishes may be added to mine, for Mrs. I—— and yourself. She is quite recovered :—Did I tell you, we have changed our lodgings, and provide for ourselves, and I market, and purchase the tails of rabbits, and the beards of oysters, and the heads and gizzards of geese, for we leave their bodies to the mighty ones of the earth, and I buy beef steaks by the ounce, and have learnt to cut up a shrimp most dextrously. In short, we live upon the extremities of animals. I hear the butcher's boy knock at the door with as fine a sheep's tail in a tray as ever you saw in your life—it is to be roasted, and if you  
were

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were here, you should have two joints out of the five.

Adieu, we are very happy, and very truly  
am I your friend, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

O 2

In

In consequence of Mr. Colman's engagement, he came to London, and on the 11th of June 1777, begun his theatrical career in the capital with the character of Shylock, which, notwithstanding his own and his friends objections, was the part the manager introduced him in ; and the manner he personated the ferocious Jew, fully satisfied the propriety of Mr. Colman's choice.

I have been told, that previous to Mr. Macklin's performance of Shylock, it was looked upon as a part of little importance, and played with the buffoonery of a Jew pedlar ; to the understanding of that venerable performer, we are obliged for the first true representation of the character ; but his warmest admirers will, I think, acknowledge, that though much sterling is left, he scarce acquired the reputation he enjoys in the Jew, from his manner of now playing it.

it. I know it will be deemed dramatic heresy, but yet dare avow, that *I think*, except in the senate scene, Henderson performed it better than I ever saw Mr. Macklin. In that scene, the judicious conception of this patriarch of the theatre, secures him from every competitor. He praised the young adventurer with great liberality for his *spirited* performance; and, on Henderson's asserting, he had never had the advantage of seeing him in the character, replied, " Sir, it was not necessary to tell *me* that; I knew you had not, or you would have played it very differently."

Testimonials from authors to authors, were, in the last age, deemed necessary embellishments to books, and as constantly subjoined as the *livelie pourtraiture of the painfuller writer*. Testimonials from players to players, are not, I believe, very frequent.

The following is the only one I ever heard Henderfon speak of having received ; and, as I know he esteemed approbation from a gentleman of Mr. Digges' learning, experience, and judgment, as giving a sanction to his performance, I publish it as a dramatic curiosity.

TO MR. HENDERSON,

*Friday, twelve o'clock.*

DEAR SIR,

I DID myself the pleasure of waiting on you this morning, to thank you for the uncommon delight I received in seeing your excellent performance of Shakespeare's Jew—I never saw a character more justly conceived, or more happily personated—I congratulate you on the great reputation you have established: a reputation you will rather augment than diminish—I think it a thousand pities you should be doomed to a provincial banishment, when you will be so much wished for in the capital. Permit

me to assure you, no person is more sensible  
of your merit, or will rejoice more in seeing  
that merit rewarded, than,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WEST DIGGES.

He



He afterwards performed Hamlet, Leon, Falstaff, Richard, Don John, and Bayes. He was requested to play *Bays*, with imitations of the different actors, which, to the credit of his prudence, he refused.

During the very hot summer of 1777, the Haymarket Theatre was crouded. Mr. Henderson being announced, operated as a charm : it attracted people of the first rank and taste to a play-house in the dog-days.

Some of the diurnal critics praised him for merit he did not possess, but that the motive was to serve Mr. Colman, there appeared *a little reason* to suspect, from the same consistent gentlemen being  
equally

equally lavish of their abuse, when he played at Drury-lane. Of this uncandid conduct he complains in the following letter.

To

TO MR. CUMBERLAND.

*October 25th, 1777.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM much obliged and honoured by your intelligence respecting the Battle of Hastings. I am ashamed to acknowledge, that I have not had an hour to myself of that kind that is fit to consider so important a matter. One should neither be indolent nor fatigued, when a work of study is to be contemplated. Fatigued I have been to an extreme degree. \* \* \* \* \*

As soon as I have gone through the Roman Father, which I now have in rehearsal, I shall dedicate my studies to the Battle, and hope to revive the same pleasing

ing and magical ideas which I felt when you read it in Queen-Anne-street.

I believe, my dear sir, you will agree that I have a most difficult task to act.

The critics call out for novelty, for spirit, for fire, for passion, for every thing in short that they are taught by nature, or by reading to expect, and yet they are perpetually interrupting my emulation by the hopeless prospect of ever attaining what they have been accustomed to delight in, from Garrick, and Macklin. I have not the vanity to think myself equal, by many degrees, to either, but is it not hard they will not let me be what I am, nor by their good will let the people come and see what that is.—I have the consolation of very good houses indeed, or these gentlemen would make my theatrical life a very painful

ful one.—There are some public prints, that even call me names. I am honoured by one writer, who perhaps never saw me out of my dramatic dress, with the name of pragmatical puppy ; another, in insulting irony calls me a monster of perfection. But still I have good houses.—I am told my Richard is a despicable attempt at something, I know not what, but still I have good houses.

I am, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

Mr.

Mr. Colman having derived material advantage from his performer's popularity, displayed great generosity at the end of the season. His conduct went "beyond the fixed and settled rules," he gave Henderson a *free benefit*, which produced upwards of two hundred pounds. He distinguished him by every attention, and frequently invited him to his table, where Henderson's delicacy and prudence once forsook him, for in the presence of a large company he took off the manger's peculiarities to his face. I need not add that so gross an insult produced a coolness on the part of Mr. Colman.

The ensuing winter he was engaged by Mr. Sheridan to perform at Drury-Lane, at a salary of ten pounds a week, and a benefit. Before this could take place it was necessary to settle his forfeiture of three hundred pounds for the failure of his Bath articles.

articles. This, I believe, was done by Mr. Sheridan giving Palmer the liberty of exhibiting the *School for Scandal*, which was, I should suppose, at least an adequate compensation; added to this, it was stipulated that Henderson should perform a few nights at Bath, which he did.

He had an early contempt for *stage trick*, and one of the first times he played Hamlet at Drury-Lane, was so fully impressed with the spirit of the character, that in the closet scene, when describing the two miniatures, he whirled the king's picture from his hand. This was marked in one of the public prints as an innovation too violent for a young man. "Mr. Garrick never did it." The following night he checked his imagination, and kept possession of the picture. This was a fresh occasion for carping, and one gentleman, who I think  
 adopted

adopted the terrific signature of *Scourge*, observed, “ that if right the first night, he must consequently be wrong the second,” and added ; “ In *our* opinion Mr. Henderson departing from the established custom of the Theatre, by sometimes neglecting to kick down the chair, on the appearance of the Ghost, which was never omitted by the greatest actor who ever graced the stage,\* and not having always *got quit* of his hat, when he starts, in the first scene, is a violation of dramatic decorum, and deserves severe reprehension from the critic. Deviations so slight as to evade the common eye, and innovations so trifling as to be thought unworthy of notice, have led the way

\* The chair in which Mr. Garrick sat, when he played in the closet scene, was somewhat different from that appropriated to the queen, the cabriole feet being tapered, and placed so much under the seat, that it fell with a touch.



way to heresies in religion, and the *abolishment* of order in civil government. Let us nip error in the bud, and not by our silence give sanction to impropriety. Being once right, let us remain so."

A friend of Henderson's sent a reply to this curious rhapsody, which, being short, I subjoin.

Two queries addressed to the *severe* SCOURGE.—Do you consider the Dramatis Personæ as *Automata*? If you do, should not the magnificent Mr. Cox be manager, and that ingenious mechanist, Mr. Jaques Droz, prompter to your puppets? These questions were not answered.

On the second of January, 1778, he appeared in the character of Bobadil. Very high expectations were formed from the *eclat*

P

with

with which it had been received at Bath. But *there* it was an imitation of Woodward, which would *here* have been deemed a burlesque of that most excellent actor. Here, I think, he failed, and, by endeavouring to avoid Woodward's manner, departed from the character.

I do not think myself at liberty to publish the name of the gentleman who wrote the following letter. I know Mr. Henderson very properly thought himself honoured by his regards, and frequently profited by his judicious and friendly remarks.

To

TO MR. HENDERSON.

*Dublin, Nov. 13, 1777.*

I SEE clearly, that you think I am not awake to your abilities, and that I am rather cold in your praise—I do assure you, you are mistaken—I know and feel your great superiority to the present race of actors, and I have had, within these twelve months, frequent opportunities of declaring it. Mr. Garrick, and Mr. B. Sheridan, can testify for me, that I ventured to *pronounce*, (that was the expression I made use of) before them, and Mr. Gibbon the historian, last winter, that you was an excellent performer in every thing, and capital in comedy. These were my words, (which Sheridan and Gibbon, I dare say, thought very pe-

remptory and assuming) but I was called upon by Mr. Garrick to declare my opinion as one which he relied upon; and Mr. Garrick immediately added his own suffrage, and told Mr. Sheridan, that it was his business to secure you as soon as possible—I rather dwell upon this *literal* fact, because Davies, in answer to my assertion, that Garrick had earnestly recommended you to Sheridan, says absurdly, that it was after such recommendation was *ineffectual*, and that you was obliged to wait 'till Sheridan had his own evidence of your powers and merit.

Here Davies grossly mistakes; whether wilfully, or not, I am not sure, for Garrick recommended you whenever he could catch you. At the latest, when your Bath articles should expire; and even then, Sheridan, in my presence, talked of the scheme  
of

of getting you from Palmer, and sending  
Griff to Bath. This Mr. Garrick and I  
both approved of — \* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

As to newspaper puffing, (which Davies  
is so fond of) it is the foolishhest thing in  
the world, because it produces all those cri-  
ticisms which you allude to. As to con-  
versation puffing from good authority, I  
think quite otherwise of it—The generality  
of the world are much led by their own  
circle; but newspaper commendation is uni-  
versally considered as the advertisement of a  
quack doctor. I saw in one paper, Bensley  
preferred to you in Horatius. I have not  
seen your Horatius, but I *have* your Al-  
canor, and I am sure your Horatius must  
be good.

Lucius Junius Brutus, and the Battle of Hastings, have been promised places in this season for more than a year past—Shirley, I believe, for years.

As to the Law of Lombardy, the author thinks the parts are equal. I differ from him widely. There is a young gallant knight driven to a despair of jealousy, by the villainous acts of a plotting rival. They fight in the end, and are the conspicuous men ; but the person worked upon I always think a better part than the worker. I go so far as to think Alonzo a finer character than Zanga. Polidore must be the favourite. He is *Posthumus*, if possible, more impassioned. This being the cast, which you seemed to me to decline, I naturally looked at the other character for you. But nothing is, or can, be yet settled about it. There is an old king, and father also, that

that requires an excellent actor ; *that*, I conclude must be crucified, as the fine part of Almada was.

As for your search for new readings, I do not like them. Your restoration of good passages I can never disapprove of. That in Richard I like very well. \* \* \* \* \*

To return to your innovations—I cannot see, how changed readings, and points, are in any sort connected with the stile of acting. It is introducing criticism into acting, which I think never should be ; and if it should be bad criticism (such as the croaking raven) what can be said for it ?

I hear your laboured shew of propriety much condemned—But all these remarks are to your honour. They would not be made, but that you are confessedly at the head of the stage.

Your sincere

And obedient servant,

E. T.

You say all your novelties are defensible; if I thought so, I should not blame you for them—You ask me, if you have ever spoiled the sense—I think grossly in the *croaking raven*, if you speak it as my reporter informs me.

In



In the summer of 1778 he went to Ireland. His reception from that generous people, is described in the following letter.

To

To Mr. I——.

*Dublin, 5th June, 1780.*

No, my dear boy, I am as well as I ought to expect, though my arms, at least one of them, are troublesome. The true reason of my not writing is, that I am half ashamed to tell you the consequences of my expedition, but I now find that I ought not to impute it to my own weakness of fame or talent, but to the universal distress and poverty this kingdom at present labours under.

The first character I played, was Hamlet, and carried hence no more than fourteen pound three shillings, though the Lord Lieutenant did me the honour of his presence.

fence. The next night I voluntarily and cheerfully gave to a charity for the distressed manufacturers : it was Falstaff—not five pounds in the galleries, nor above seventy in the whole house ; a strong instance of their inability upon so good, so useful an occasion. My third character was Shylock, and there was not expences in the house.—This night I shall play Richard.—I have given up all thoughts of getting any thing, except by a benefit, which I have reason to hope will be handsome, for I cannot describe to you how I am carested by the people of fashion, the only few who can go to a play. The Duke of Leinster does me every kindness imaginable. I was last night at the Castle, at the ball and supper. More than a hundred people of rank and fashion, and taste, desired to be made known to me.—In short, more flattery, more attention, and consequently more happiness,

I never

I never tasted—my spirits have been in one state of the most delicious delirium ever since I touched this shore.—I have no time though, for it is the custom here to wait upon strangers, and my lodgings are crowded when I am at home.—Except lodgings it has not cost me a shilling since I came to this place, nor would it if I were to stay here this six months.—I am very glad I came, because it will extend my connections and my fame, though it may not be very advantageous to my purse. I intended to have written a whimsical account of my voyage; we were forty hours upon the water, but I was not sick above two hours the whole time, and that moderately.—I don't know what my friend E—— has done for me, nor when I am to quit this place. Whenever I do, it will be with reluctance—but if it will not take up too much of his time, I should like to know about it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Barry is here, but she finds the condition of the people, and I believe will not play, if she does I will make safe conditions for myself. I am to have ten guineas a night, and if the house amounts to a fixed sum, fifteen. But my benefit is my only object.

J. H.

Thanks for the Plays.

After

After his return from Ireland, on the 13th of January 1779, the writer of these anecdotes had the honour of presenting to him, that best of all good gifts a wife, \* and the following year, as sponsor, gave the name of Harriet to a daughter, who, by the death of her father, has lost not only a protector, but an instructor very capable of forming and improving her mind,

Among other characters new to him in the metropolis, he performed King John.

One of his friends wrote him a few remarks, which I have subjoined, as I think there are some sensible strictures upon his playing.—The advice at the conclusion, that

\* She was daughter to Mr. Figgins, of Chippenham in Somersetshire.

that “when preparing for a new part he should retire to his own room, &c.” was founded upon the writer’s having observed Mr. *Henderson’s mode of preparation*, which was almost invariably this. When a new part was appointed him, he first read the play : I mention this, because I have heard the practice is not universal among the dramatis personæ. He then imprinted the words of the character he was to personate upon his memory, which, to him, was not a very difficult task ; looked over the play slightly a second time, and then laid it aside, and though this ceremony was frequently gone through a fortnight before the performance, seldom looked at it again.—The evening before his appearance, was usually preceded by a hearty dinner, a chearful, but moderate glass of wine, and a game at cribbage, which

was

was almost always his amusement until a few minutes before the curtain drew up, and he was obliged, sometimes very unwilling, to appear at the Theatre.



TO MR. HENDERSON,

DEAR HENDERSON,

I LAST night sat by Kenrick during the play, in the front boxes—I had a good deal of conversation with him—He seemed not unwilling to do justice to your merit, but complained of your method of toning your voice ; by copying Garrick's under-play, he said you were scarce intelligible to the audience—I assured him that he was greatly mistaken, for that you had not very often seen Garrick, nor could you copy his King John, which Garrick had not acted for thirty years past. However, he was so far right that you apparently wanted spirit, and your voice was lower and more indistinct than the crack'd pipkin of the king

Q

of

of France.—You lost opportunities of getting applause with Pandolph, you gave little or no force to the popular, as well as just sentiments of an English king, disdain-  
 ing to be governed by an Italian priest—Your action was extremely confined and spiritless—your general idea of the rascal John, who compared to Richard is as a foot-pad, or pick-pocket, opposed to a highwayman, was just; your scene with Hubert was well planned, and masterly, though you was rather too low—I never lost a word of your's 'till last night—Kenrick observed that you wanted variety—In the dying scene, you made ample amends for all deficiencies in the foregoing acts—Kenrick owned you was excellent.

And now let me remind you, of your neglecting to give due fire and spirit to that  
 excellent

excellent scene of John with Hubert in the fourth act—your reproaches lost all effect with the audience from under-play, or taking your voice too low. You suffered Hubert to make the most of that passionate interview, and to rob you of the applause you would have merited by a proper exertion of your powers.—I told K—— that I fancied you was not well, or at least not in spirits.

Believe me I do not aim to teach or direct you, who know so much more of the matter than I can pretend to, but the less skillful stander-by can see defects in a very able gamester.

I would recommend your imitation of Garrick in one part of his conduct: whenever he had a new or capital character to act, he saw no company that day, and dined

alone upon a trifling dish. This was his constant practice, I believe from his first treading the stage 'till he left it.

On such an occasion as acting a new part, &c. I would after dining with Mr. and Mrs. I——, retire to my own room, nor would I be disturbed by any visitor whatsoever.— I tell you again and again, you will destroy both voice and stomach by your cursed hot fippings—excuse my freedom,

Yours, ever,

T. D.

*Saturday eleven o'Clock.*

The fat parson G—— is just gone past to preach a charity sermon.

In consequence of this letter and some other advice, he once changed his custom, retired to his chamber and studied his part on the day of playing. The consequence was a coldly correct, and most vapid performance, which convinced him and his friends that his first practice was right, at least for him.—He seriously vowed no earthly power should induce him to repeat the experiment, adding, at the same time, that he thought it possible, that a number of very grave men, who muzzed away much time alone in their own apartments, were quite as likely to be sleeping as studying.

During the time he performed at Drury-Lane, Mr. Sheridan the elder, very properly considering his peculiar excellence in speaking tales, fables, or any light airy composition, revived Sir John Vanbrugh's *Æsop*, with some alterations, which, from having heard

Henderfon read it, I think he would have made a most popular and entertaining character. He entered with true humour into the spirit of the little tales, and gave full force to the *Cervantic* gravity of the old moralist. But the town were too fastidious to suffer the performance in even its altered state, Mr. Yates personated a country squire, a character the present age know only from description; the savage preferred his hounds to his wife, and Æsop was driven from the stage,

Among those who most violently insisted upon its being withdrawn, were some of the critical leaders of the taste of the town, who considered, and perhaps with good reason, that should it succeed, the fabulist might be made a vehicle to answer the diurnal remarks which ornament our daily

daily papers, and therefore very prudently silenced him the first night.

In the summer of 1779 he returned to Dublin, and was gratified by every mark of attention, noticed by people of distinction, and received, not merely as an actor, but a companion, by families of the first consequence.

The annexed letter is one example, among many others, of the respect with which the gentlemen of Ireland, distinguish and protect genius, in any situation.

Mr. Gardiner's testimony is so high an honour to Henderson's memory, that I should not be justified in withholding it. I hope,—I believe,—the same liberality of sentiment which dictated such a letter, will pardon its insertion.

*Copy of a Letter from Mr. Gardiner to Lord  
Doneraile,*

*Black-Rock, July 6th, 1779.*

MY DEAR LORD,

A S Mr. Henderson is going to Cork to perform there, I thought I could not do him a greater service than to recommend him to your attention. He has given us much entertainment here, and I doubt not will afford you equal pleasure in the line of his profession. I have had frequent opportunities of being in company with him and Mrs. H. and have found them so agreeable, that I need make no apology for introducing them to your lordship's acquaintance, particularly,



particularly, as such talents as his, united with good humour, and good breeding, are at this day peculiarly rare, .

I remain, &c,

J. GARDINER,

The

The ensuing season Mr. Sheridan and Henderson disagreed upon terms, the expectations of the latter being higher than the manager thought proper to comply with; what those expectations were founded upon, are described as follows.

To

To Mr. I——.

*Dublin, June 29, 1779.*

I WAITED for something of more importance than our safe arrival to inform you of, and now I have a subject. The principal people are so desirous of my wintering here, that they have made me the most flattering, the most honourable proposals. To secure me from the *accidents* (ACCIDENT is here a word of great pith and moment, and used for safety, because letters may be mislaid) which may happen in a negotiation with the Irish manager; they will raise a subscription among themselves, and the Lord Lieutenant himself offers a hundred guineas towards it; the rest will amount to a larger sum than I should receive in England, even if my demands were complied with, and I  
consider

consider the house in Buckingham-street as untenanted, and pay the rent myself. Now I am in a state of most tormenting suspense ; for I hear nothing either from the elder, or the younger Sheridan—They seem to have no great earnestness in their wish that I should continue with them, and yet I do not care to stay here, unless they positively answer me, *yes* or *no*,

This place is poor beyond all names of poverty, at least so the people say, and I am sure the Theatre bears the marks of it ; but if I stay, I depend upon those who cannot be poor in any country. Mrs. Crawford certainly stays here, and I shall have the advantage of playing with her. C——d is abominated by the critics, and all people here are critics. I am now going to Corke, so that you must direct to me there. If you would see the elder Mr. Sheridan, and learn

learn from him what I am to do, I should be glad. I dare not send him the proposals that are made me at large, lest it should be construed an artifice to raise my consequence in England, or a treachery to the proprietors here. But something I must do, and speedily.

Whether the proposals here are accepted or not, nothing can be more favourable to my reputation, than their having been made by people of such rank, and taste, and importance, as they are.

Adieu, my dearest friend,

Assure yourself, I am most affectionately,

Your's, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

To Mr. I——.

July 16, 1779.

THE very day that I wrote to you, I wrote also to the elder Sheridan ; I told him my offers, and gave him 'till the first of August to determine. I shall not recede from my claims, as I think them just.

I yesterday received a letter from the treasurer of Drury-lane, acquainting me, that he was ordered by the proprietors, ten days before, to write to me, and to inform me that they were ready to treat with me upon the same terms as last year. I have no doubt that this was written in consequence of mine to S——, and that *the ten days* is a lye. This letter I answered, by saying, that Mr. Sheridan, the elder, was acquainted

quainted with my resolutions, and that I should be governed by his answer, which I shall, and by the first of August I shall decide. Nothing is more likely, than that S—— would wish to be the hero: he probably wishes it, and it may probably happen. I do not see, my dear lad, what you can do; I must wait his reply, and act accordingly. At all events, it is an honourable retreat for me, and I may be more wanted another year. I must write more at large, when I know more, and have more time.

J. H.

To

To Mr. I——.

*Cork, Aug. 24, 1779.*

DEAR JACK,

MY letter to E—— states all my designs, and I need not repeat them to you. When you have read the letter will you send it? I write to E——, because I would have it shewn to Sheridan; and I am resolved to adhere to my terms. I can make a very handsome bargain here, and complete it in three months. I shall get more money, and be less a slave, and escape the unworthy treatment I have found in London. I feel my own importance more than ever I did, and I will not be trampled on. Pray, my dear boy, copy, or get this letter copied, for I have not time, and learn, if you can,



can what answer he gets, and write to me at Birmingham. I do not urge *him* to an answer; because it looks like too much anxiety.

J. H.

R

To

To Mr. E——.

Aug. 24, 1779.

DEAR E——,

YOU will, perhaps, be disappointed when I decline Mr. Sheridan's offer, but you ought, of all people, to be the least so, because you must remember the conversation you was present at, between Mr. S—— and myself, when I made my first agreement with him. You remember, that my salary was no more than ten pounds a week, because my forfeiture was urged, and you remember Mr. Sheridan urged that forfeiture being *equally* paid, whether in *money*, or in *property*. You remember also, that Mr. Sheridan urged, that I should be moderate in my first claims, and *rise*, by degrees, in the Theatre, and now he proposes that I should

should sink in it ; for fifteen guineas a week is not more than I had, computing my forfeiture, and I ought in justice to have ranked in the Theatre agreeable to *that* salary, though, in the quietness of my disposition, I forbore a claim which might be troublesome without material advantage. My reception in this kingdom, among such persons as it is most an actor's honour as well as interest to please, has not moderated my opinion of the justice of my claim, to an equal salary, and equal rank, with Mr. Smith. When I conversed with the elder Mr. Sheridan in the Park, he told me, that Mr. S——, his son, could not deny the reasonableness of my claim, but that, for certain reasons, it could not be complied with for the next season ; that if I would stay on my present salary for one year more, I should have my demands in future. To this I answered, agreeable to my desire of accommodation, &c.

that if he would give me twelve guineas per week *now*, and fifteen guineas a week in a future season, I would be content. If Mr. Sheridan had made me *that* offer now, I believe I should have closed with him, but I cannot accept his twelve pounds, and no assurance of rising the next season. I could have contented myself with postponing my claim, but am not content to relinquish it.

I have received a letter from Mr. T. S. in which he tells me, that the patentees are determined to raise no salaries, and yet I am assured, that an actor, with whom it would do me no very great honour to be compared, has obtained an encrease of his. I know very well, how little force, arguments and reasons have with managers, and, therefore, I do not use them there; but this is, my friend, to justify myself to you—Whilst I  
feel

feel no diminution of my own powers, nor any decline of the public approbation, I see no reason why I should humble myself to the disadvantage of my interest, or my importance in a Theatre.—My design, therefore, is to set off for England, play a few nights at Birmingham, proceed to London; from thence return to Ireland about December, which will be time enough to compleat entirely the plan I have in meditation, and to answer all my designs. I shall be in Buckingham-street, I hope, by the latter end of September, unless I find it convenient to perform longer in the country. I hope you will not condemn me for not accepting Mr. Sheridan's offer, nor think I am at all in exile. Why should I leave a place where I am careffed by all ranks of people, to accept terms that degrade me from my first conditions, and keep me inferior to those whom the public do not prefer to me.—I

must remind you, that the conditions on which I stay here, are such as, I believe, have not happened to any other actor, and, therefore, must do me honour in the world, I may, possibly, pass my next summer in London to great advantage, as well as convenience; in the mean time, I will not weakly embrace the fetters which the London coalition are forging for us. It requires no very great foresight to observe the toils which are gathering round us. I thank God, I need not at this period rush into them, and, therefore, I feel easier than when I left England,

I am, &c.

J. H.

P. S. In order that my terms may be fully understood, I repeat to you, that I should  
so

so far compromise the matter, to accept of twelve guineas for the next season, and fifteen for the two succeeding—But I cannot play for twelve, without an assurance of the rest.

At

At the commencement of the winter 1779, he removed to Covent Garden, at a salary of twelve pounds a week, and performed several characters, new to him, with encreased reputation — Macbeth, for the first time at this Theatre, on the 18th of October.

When he appeared with the daggers after the murder of Duncan, I think the countenance of horror and remorse which he assumed, was equal to any exhibition I ever saw upon the stage, and much critical knowledge of the character was displayed through the whole ; yet in the other scenes he wanted the speaking terrors of Mr. Garrick's look and action, which can no more be described than they can be equalled.

The summer of 1780 he passed at Liverpool. To say he was well received, will  
be



be a repetition of that which has been already said, but, surely, the actor who has powers of attraction sufficient to induce men of science to come from distant parts of a province to be present at his performance, must be allowed to derive some honour from their attendance; especially when it is considered, that province was Lancashire; for it will not be easy to find any country so eminently distinguished for the liberality and scientific knowledge, of those who have been, and are its inhabitants.

In the winter he returned to Covent-Garden. Among other characters he performed Wolsey. His sensible speaking and accurate elocution marked the character, but in some of the scenes he wanted that dignity which

which the poet and historian\* (for an historian our immortal dramatist may be called) has given to the haughty Cardinal.

He played Sir John Brute, and I thought pleasantly, but Mr. Garrick observed, "it was the city Sir John, for egad he had neither the air nor the manner of the rake of fashion."

I believe it was in this season he first personated Iago, a character in which perhaps he has not been equalled. A very good idea of the manner in which he  
*looked*

\* A writer of some eminence says, that the great Duke of Marlborough was ignorant of English history, and to prove his assertion, gives an instance of his Grace having once quoted Shakespeare, as an authority upon a disputed point. The instance was surely unfortunate,

*looked it*, may be formed from Bartolozzi's engraving; when I add it was from a sketch by Stuart, *though at only one sitting*, 'tis scarce necessary to say it exhibits a most striking resemblance.

Sir Charles Easy he played for a benefit. The character sat heavy upon him. I remember Foote used to tell of an eminent actor of the old school, who being informed he must play Richard the Third, the following night, returned for answer to the manager, "that his rheumatism was so bad he could scarcely stir hand or foot, but if they would get up the Careless Husband, he was ready to play *Sir Charles Easy*, instead of the king."

Finding it impossible to make his own terms in the summer of 1781, he had not any Theatrical employment, except that he  
one

one night played Falstaff at the Haymarket, for the benefit of Mr. Edwin.

His hours of leisure he frequently employed in copying old plays, and I verily believe it was upon these occasions only, that he read them, for no man had less reverence for the BLACK LETTER than Mr. John Henderson. His opinion of large libraries was not much more favourable. He used to quote the remark of somebody, who said, "that most men who got together vast quantities of books, put him in mind of the Italian singer who founded a Seraglio." I believe, in general, the greatest collectors are not the most remarkable for being the deepest readers. Indeed the time taken up in hunting after *scarce books*, does not leave much learned leisure for perusing them.

In the summer of 1782 he played at Liverpool, where I think his benefit amounted to nearly two hundred pounds.

In the winter he performed Lufignan, but his powers were unequal to either that or Lear. The pathetic was not his *forte*, had he been left to the choice of his own characters, I believe he would no more have played Lear than Romeo. He thought highly, and not unjustly of his own merit in speaking the Chorusses to Henry the Fifth, which being rather an unpopular play, he did not, I believe, appear in after January 1779, when I saw him. His figure acquired grace from the Vandyke habit. His recitation led me to regret it was not repeated. He was accurate, animated, energetic.

In the November of 1783 he appeared in Tamerlane, to Mr. Kemble's Bajazet; but the fire of the tyrannic Bajazet predominated over the tame Tamerlane, who, notwithstanding the avowed intention of the poet, was to give a semblance of, and pay a compliment to, our third William, is a vapid, heavy, and insipid part.

The summer of 1784 he passed at Edinburgh, and it was observed, that the *Reverendi*, and *Reverendissimi*, laid aside their ancient prejudices\*, and appeared in a play-house, to behold Mrs. Siddons, and Mr. Henderson.

\* These prejudices were not peculiar to Scotland; the same narrowness of sentiment pervaded a numerous class of people in this kingdom, not very many years ago. On a set of itinerants being once tolerably well received at Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, a Mr. Watfon nailed a card, with the following lines, upon  
the

Henderfon. How different were the sentiments of this people in the days of that severe scourge of dissipation, John Knox, when the representation of a play would have excited horror, and the whole company had been devoted to destruction, as a regiment under the banner of the woman of Babylon.

During

the door of the barn where they enacted, which was dignified with the name of, *The Summer Royal Theatre*,

“ How art thou fallen, oh ! Kidderminster ;  
 “ When every spulster, spinner, spinster,  
 “ Whose fathers liv’d in † Baxter’s prayers,  
 “ Are now run gadding after players :  
 “ Oh ! Richard, couldst thou take a survey,  
 “ Of this vile place, for sin so scurvy,  
 “ Thy pious shade, enrag’d would scold them,  
 “ And make the barn too hot to hold them.”

† Richard Baxter, who was very many years minister of that place.

During the summer of 1785, he performed a few nights at Dublin, and was honoured by an invitation to the Castle, where he read the story of Le Fevre, and some other select passages, from his favourite Sterne, to the Duke and Dutchess of Rutland, and their court.

In the Lent season, Mr. Sheridan and he united in public readings at Freemasons Hall. The terms were thought high, but justified by success. The opinion entertained of them by the public, may be gathered from the crowds who attended every night during their continuance, and from the sum which was gained ; I think not less than eight hundred pounds. Having in a former page given my opinion of his performance, I need not repeat it. He however read into reputation some things which  
 seemed



seemed to have been gathered to the dull  
 of ancient days, and but for such a revival  
 had probably been still covered with the cloak  
 of oblivion.\* Had Mr. Henderson lived,  
 this entertainment would have been conti-  
 nued, as he requested from a gentleman emi-  
 nent for his taste and judgement,† a selec-  
 tion from those writers most likely to be  
 popular.

Previous to his voyage to Dublin, some  
 little differences between Mr. Harris and  
 him had been accommodated, and he renewed  
 an engagement for four years, I have been  
 told, at seventeen, eighteen, nineteen and  
 S twenty

\* *One* Printfeller sold 6000 copies of John Gilpin's  
*Race*, which had been several years before printed in  
 one of the public papers; but scarcely noticed.

† Mr. Caleb Whitefoord.

twenty pounds a week. But his last performance was Horatius in the Roman Father, on the third of November, 1785.

He was soon after seized with a disorder which seemed to have submitted to medicine, but when his complaints put on the most favourable appearance, a sudden death deprived the public of an excellent performer, and his friends of an agreeable companion, on the 25th of November, 1785, in the 40th year of his age.

An eminent surgeon gives the following account :

“ Henderson’s liver was entirely undiseased ; the lungs in perfect health ; the brain had no extravasation, whatever to external appearance. His stomach was preternaturally strong. His heart was the only  
part

part of the system which failed. His heart was literally broken, that is, it had lost its accustomed firmness of tone. It is by far the stoutest muscle in the human body, and the leading vessels were all ossified, or ossifying. In short, if I had not known Mr. Henderson, and seen his face, his teeth, and his hair, I should have supposed from his heart, that his age had been ninety."

On the third of December following, he was interred in Westminster Abbey, near Doctor Johnson and Mr. Garrick, the chapter and the choir attending to pay respect to his memory. His pall was supported by the honourable Mr. Byng, Mr. Malone, Mr. Whitefoord, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Hoole.

I have not seen any epitaph to his memory, nor is it easy to write one properly descriptive of his profession.

“ The ACTOR only, shrinks from time’s award ;  
Feeble tradition is HIS memory’s guard ;  
By whose faint breath his merits must abide,  
Unvouch’d by proof—to substance unallied !”

The most concise Epitaph I recollect to have seen upon a player, was

EXIT B U R B A G E.

From the time of his *entré* on a London stage, he was overwhelmed with indiscriminate and ill judged flattery. This might serve the manager, but injured the player, and inflated the man.

It so far kindled the embers of vanity in his mind, as to demand the full exercise of  
his

his understanding to keep them from a blaze. It called forth critical opposition, which sometimes produced too severe a scrutiny.

His death has embalmed his name, since that time we have had, not characters, but echoing plaudits. Professing to describe what Henderfon was, they tell you what a player and a man ought to be.

Such eulogies display the ingenuity of the writer, but do not much sanctify the object of their adulation.

They have enveloped his character in the mist of panegyric, and in their zeal to consecrate his memory have forgotten that excess of decoration disguises and destroys the resemblance, of those it is intended to dig-

nify ; for to all the descriptions of him which I have seen, it was necessary to inscribe the name, or I should never have suspected such high coloured pictures were intended as portraits of Henderson.

Absolute perfection is not the lot of humanity, and after all the fine things which have been said, his relative merit is the criterion by which he must be tried, nor will that merit suffer much diminution by being opposed to those with whom he was contemporary.

If it should be thought I am too minute, I can only answer, that when reading of a man who was eminent, I have ever wished to know what were his peculiar dispositions, and domestic habits, by what qualities he attracted attention, and what were the methods by which he acquired reputation,

By

By some it may be thought that I overrate his abilities, and there may be those who will think I have not allowed him all that he possessed. In the delineation of a man's person, or disposition, I consider likeness to the original as the leading excellence, and that I have attempted in the following

## C H A R A C T E R.

As an actor he had many disadvantages to cope with. His height was below the common standard. He had an uncompact frame. His limbs were ill proportioned; they were too short; he had not much of that flexibility of countenance which anticipates the tongue, that language of the eye which prepares the spectator for the

coming sentence, enchains attention, and ensures partiality.\*

His voice wanted the melifluous silver sound which charms the ear, and was deficient in that dignified strength which commands respect. It was not suited to the softness of love, where the very sound produces sympathy, nor to the wild rage of tyranny, which awes the multitude.

But the strength of his judgment, and the fervency of his mind, broke through the mounds which nature seemed to have placed between him and excellence.

His

\* He frequently said, "Whenever he threw meaning into his eye, *it was from somewhat which lay behind it*, for he was conscious, *naturally*, it was heavy, and destitute of expression." In the hours when his countenance was lighted up, it bore a strong resemblance to a portrait of Betterton, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, in the possession of Mr. Samuel Ireland.



His comprehension was ample, his knowledge diversified, and his elocution accurate,

Where sensible recitation was the leading feature of a character, he had no superior. In the varieties of Shakespeare's soliloquy, where more is meant than meets the ear, he had no equal.

In that species of eloquence, he discriminated with peculiar propriety the melancholy Jacques, and the pensive Hamlet, the whimsical Benedick, and the voluptuous Falstaff. In the whole of that part he was without a competitor, and not having left any lawful successor, the humour of the fat knight must be confined to the closet.

Being little acquainted with fencing, or dancing, his deportment was neither easy  
nor

nor disengaged, and in scenes where the former accomplishment was necessary, appeared to great disadvantage. Sometimes the superior skill of his opponent struck the sword from his hand, at the moment which required its firmest grasp—yet the character of Hamlet, he sustained with such taste, feeling, and propriety, that we forgot every light imperfection; and, except when he would saw the air with rather too much sameness, he approached very near perfection. His manner of speaking three words, “ *The fair Ophelia!* ” still vibrates upon my ear, It was equal to Mrs. Crawford’s, *was he alive?* Superior it could not be.

In the instructions to the players, it will not be violating truth, to say, he excelled Mr. Garrick. In one, we saw the Manager; in the other, the Prince of Denmark.

His

His range was extensive, especially in comedy. I do not so much mean in the number of parts, as their opposition of character\*,

In the flimsy declamation of modern tragedy, he added little to his reputation. Shakespeare was the deity he worshipped, entered into the spirit of the characters, as drawn by that mighty master of the human heart, and feeling with enthusiasm, exhibited them with ardour. Yet to some he was unequal; and who has been able to personate all the creations of a Shakespeare's boundless fancy?

He

\* To instance a few. What can be more dissimilar than Iago and Benedick; Hamlet and Falstaff; Shylock and Posthumus; Jaques and Don John; Brutus and Comus; Cardinal Wolsey and Sir John Brute; Leon and Sir Giles Overreach,

He had most uncommon powers of imitation, and gave, with the voice and gesture, the countenance, turn of thought, and language of the person whose manner he assumed\*.

Of his abilities as a writer, I have had so frequent occasion to give my opinion in

\* I recollect a circumstance, which will more fully explain what I mean.

When I once came with him from the late Doctor Johnson's, I remarked that we had forgotten to mention one of his old friends having just married a third wife. I added, "What would the Doctor have said to it?" "Sir," replied Henderson, "he would have said, man is born to be deceived. We see daily instances where expectation subdues experience. This will be an additional example of the fallacy of hope, and disappointment of expectation. Yet we must allow the man has *courage*, or after the sufferings of two campaigns, he would not voluntarily expose himself on the forlorn hope, —*He will be blown up, Sir!*"

in this volume, that I will not repeat what has been already said—I submit them to the judgment of the reader.

He was a close and acute reasoner, and an expert logician. Though ignorant of the *names* of his weapons of argument, he could wield them with adroitness and power.

In the polite arts he had a good taste; to an eye that quickly discerned defects in sculpture, or painting, he joined a freedom of ridicule, which did not add to the number of his friends amongst the second class of artists.

His memory was uncommonly tenacious, and to that he was more indebted than to laborious study, or close application, for in his early years he was indolent. But his quickness

quickness of perception soon attained whatever he attempted, and once attained it became his own.

He used to expatiate on Dr. Johnson's tendency to superstition, and affected more freedom of thinking than he possessed, for he believed much which he would not acknowledge.

His spirits were generally high, but there were hours, even after he had the most flattering prospects of fame and fortune, when they sunk into the lowest depression.\* Whether he acquired this tendency from the

\* At such times he has often told me the following story :—When his brother was ten, and he not more than eight years of age, their well being depending upon the life of their mother, she was afflicted with a violent  
nervous

the books he read, or his disposition led him to such studies, I will not determine ; it is however certain that his reading was uncommonly

nervous disorder, which had sunk her into a deep melancholy. While suffering under this, she one morning left her house and children, who waited her return with impatience. Night approached, but their parent did not come. Full of terror, the two boys went in search of her. Ignorant what course to take, they wandered until midnight, about the places where she used to walk, but wandered without success. They agreed to return home, but neither of them knew the way. Fatigued, alarmed, distressed, they sat down on a bank to weep, when they observed at some distance a luminous appearance, and supposing it a candle in some friendly habitation, hastily directed their steps towards it. As they moved, the light moved also, and glided from field to field, for a considerable time. At length, it seemed fixed, and on their near approach, vanished on the side of a large piece of water. On the margin, they found their mother in a state from which she was roused by the presence and tears of her children.

This

uncommonly multifarious. It comprehended all books upon apparitions, illusions of the devil, and visions; from *Adye's Candle in the Dark* to *Calif's Wonders of the invisible World*. He had trod the whole circle of witchcraft, from *the History of the Witch of Endor*, to *the Story of Mary Squires*. Books of horror he had perused from *Fox's Martyrology*, to *the Account of the Dutch Cruelties at Amboyna*. To all this he added a thorough knowledge of the English classics, whose beauties he fully conceived, and eminently displayed, by the judgment, variety, and humour of his public readings. He knew the French language

This he has often asserted, he religiously believed to be neither an *ignus fatuus*, nor a creation of the imagination, but a kind interposition of Providence, for the preservation of the widow, and the widow's sons.



guage well, and spoke it with great fluency and elegance.

His temper was placid, and under very uncommon government ; I have not the recollection of ever having seen him in a passion. He was not ashamed of obligations, but frequent in his acknowledgments.

In the acquirement of friends he was fortunate. The later years of his life were honoured with the notice of men from whose conversation much was to be gathered, and his own equability of temper, and accomodating manners conciliated their regards.

If there was sometimes a little interchange of flattery, it was perhaps equally gratifying to each party. Henderson said, “ it is the commerce of life, and when any one avows himself so fastidious that

T

his

his mind revolts at such incense, we may fairly presume, he pretends to reject what was never offered, and rails at that branch of devotion, because he is not the object of it." He acknowledged it pleased him, and boldly asserted that no actor could perform well unless he was flattered, both in and out of the theatre. \*

Like

\* I think it was the late Mr. Topham Beauclerc, who inserted as a note in Cibber's Apology—That Mr. Garrick told him, when he read *Lethe* to his Majesty, he felt such a pressure upon his spirits, as disabled him from giving any force to the different characters of his own farce. His powers were frozen, and he was scarce capable of reading it to the conclusion. "Conceive to yourself, said he, a man wrapped up in a wet blanket reading a play to a king, and you will have a perfect idea of my situation."

This proves what Cibber asserts in his Apology, vol. 2. page 76. *That actors accustomed to loud and general plaudits cannot exert themselves without.*

Like his predecessor in his most popular character, he was not averse to the pleasures of a good table, and they were well bestowed upon him; he became exhilarated. I never saw him play Falstaff with so much glee, as one evening of a lord-mayor's day, when he had dined and drank sack and sugar at the house of a friend. His eye was lighted up, and his whole countenance beamed voluptuous humour.

Having been early forced into the practice of strict œconomy, he was fully sensible of the value of money, and acquired a habit of rejecting all expence which was not absolutely necessary, and the criterion was not his *income*, but his *wants*. With this attention the wages of his labour naturally accumulated, and considering him as knowing so well how to profit by his talents, he was

singular instance of prudence being united with genius.

I think if he had lived as long as Mr. Garrick, he would have been at least as rich.

The letters and poems which follow, having no immediate connexion with the anecdotes, it was thought best to insert them at the latter end of the volume. Those letters which are without dates, I have, near as my recollection enabled me, placed in the same progression of time in which they were written.

To the Rev. Mr. P——.

*London, October 1st, 1769.*

I differ from you.—I believe objects of speculation have more power to charm the soul from a sense of its affliction, than *acts* of real and solid benevolence.

The greatness of mind which impels men to beneficent actions, prevents their dwelling upon them. When a man has acquired an habitual generosity, and greatness of soul, the exercise of that generosity, makes little or no durable impression upon his mind; it is become a part of his nature, and performed without attention. It is not so with that species of wisdom which impels the soul to dart into the regions of enquiry and investigation. The spirits are agitated, the

passions are engaged, and expand in the pursuit.—With what extacy does the mind glow upon every new acquisition.—How in a fine frenzy rolling, doth it

“ Glance from heaven to earth,

“ From earth to heaven,

“ And as imagination bodies forth

“ The forms of things unknown,

“ Turns them to shape,

“ And gives to airy nothing,

“ A local habitation and a name.”

Every faculty is in exertion—pain, sickness, poverty, and all its consequential horrors, where are ye—funk, lost, and trembling, at the throne of Genius.—What but its wondrous potency could invigorate so many great men, and turn the darkness of their dungeon into light.

Hath

Hath not the soul continued its pursuits,  
 with lank and fleshless famine on one side,  
 and restless justice, bearing in her hand  
 an iron key, on the other. Gracious hea-  
 ven ! When affliction reareth the massy club !  
 When oppression shaketh the whip of scor-  
 pions !—give me but one spark of this di-  
 vine enthusiasm, and I will endure the  
 blow. \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

To the Rev. Mr. P——.

*London, December 21, 1769.*

I HAVE received your present; I gave one of the pheasants to Mr. —— I thank you for the other—I ate it where you were *cordially* drank to—make a pun of that, and you may suppose we toasted you in Geneva.

I have a design in meditation, which if it succeeds I shall with promptitude convey to you. I reason upon your temper from my own, and state you to myself as interested in all my concerns.——Holland the comedian is dead, and ranting is no more.—Junius is outrageous, but vain is eloquence—obstinacy loses all senses, but that of feeling.—



feeling.—I write this in poor spirits and worfe health, an impertinent cold has fixed upon my throat, and a troublesome pain upon my head, and this I owe to Garrick's playing Hastings the other night.—I should be tempted to moralize here upon the constant fucceffion of pain to entertainment, but that I will not usurp your province.

I long to tranſlate a ſermon of Flechier's *upon Chriſtmas-day*; I never met with an introduction ſo ſuitably majestic, and language ſo full of dignity—you may poſſibly have it done by the next year, though I don't know whether it would ſuit your audience.—There is another alſo, upon *the wiſe mens offerings*, which my heart burns to copy.—I never before conſidered their offerings of gold, and myrrh, as emblematical, but only as preſents of honour and humility.

Mr.

Mr. D—— desires to be remembered to you ; I gave him a hint of the thirty sermons you received. He looked a little disconcerted, and I believe repents his refusal. — We have a new comedy ; I have not seen it played, but I borrowed the pamphlet, and I do not recollect ever to have read any thing more dull and uninteresting, and yet it succeeds with the town,

I am, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

To

To Mr. ———.

Who said, "*He sometimes acted against the conviction of his feelings, rather than be unlike the rest of the world.*"

*London Dec. 25th.*

"Dare to be wise,—begin,—for once begun,

"Your task is easy,—half the work is done."

HORACE.

AS long as the modes of fashion continue to be repugnant to wisdom, this counsel of Horace will deserve the closest attention. To steer against the popular current of error is indeed a noble daring.—A mere speculative theorist, whose ideas are gathered, more from the volume of recorded incidents, than from the sphere they were acted in, would think it unnecessary to enjoin

enjoin men to dare to be, that which his books inform him every man struggles to be thought ; but the man of the world sees instances every day, either in himself or others, where many opportunities of acquiring wisdom, or displaying it, are neglected, not from actual ignorance, or inaptitude of conception, but from an indolent or cowardly adherence to the reigning fashions of vice, error, impudence, or presumption.

True courage encreases with the prospect of danger. — That there is great danger in opposing the world in their most ardent pursuits, every one will allow who has ever felt the bitterness of neglect, or the poignancy of ridicule. The soul in almost every respect acts superior to the body ; its sufferings are more acute, its pleasures more exquisite. — Many have by constitutional vigour dared to expose their persons to all the dangers

gers of destructive war, whose spirits are so subject to distress, that popular clamours, or even the pen of an essayist, can hold them in the continual perplexities of terror.

This argues a species of courage, very different from bodily daring to be necessary in Horace's advice, and a courage much superior too.

It has fallen within my observation, to see impertinence and absurdity, which shocked the understanding of every one except the speaker, by mere dint of resolute perseverance change their forms, and become, if not admired, at least endured. And indeed it hath been from such a confident delivery, that impertinence and error have forced their way into the world as they have done. If folly can thus change opinions, and render itself acceptable, how  
much

much more so might wisdom.—I shall be told, perhaps, that their qualities are so different as to render the same modes of persuasion impracticable.—That error is presumptuous, and positive, and that the concomitants of wisdom, are meekness and diffidence.—I do not deny it.—Horace himself was of the same opinion, and therefore recommended it to them by the highest incitement of honour, to *dare* to be wise. He thought even meekness and diffidence virtues that were to be concealed, when the honour of wisdom was in question.—You may possibly quote our great model of christianity, as an instance of wisdom and meekness, united in the same person : but I beg leave to observe, that he never delivered his laws, or his injunctions with timidity—He suffered for his manly and bold advancement of them. He suffered with meekness, but gave laws with dignity, firmness, and vigour.—

The

—The world, I mean the enlightened part of it, have long since received his maxims, and blushed for the dishonour thrown upon the lawgiver.

Horace wrote in times very nearly resembling our own. Folly was popular in Rome, and so was courage; he therefore thought nothing so likely to stimulate his countrymen to wisdom, as an exertion of their favourite passion. He would have, folly vanquished, and lie in chains, to encrease the triumphs of those who added kingdoms to the empire.

Philosophers have been ever accused of want of courage; I think Dryden somewhere calls them, cowards by profession. But in this instance, every one may become a hero. It belongs merely to the soul, and wisdom should be ashamed to nurse any opinion,

nion, which it dare not promulgate and defend.

To shew of how great force example is among us, I must remark that when a genius rises, he gives law to thousands ; kindles imaginations that would have otherwise sunk into torpor, and warms those pens, which else would have frozen. It would be the same, my friend, with every other species of wisdom—Do but dare to begin, with a resolute purpose and countenance ; if it does not answer, say there is no truth in

SHANDY.

To



To Mr. I——.

*From the Banks of the Thames, June 18.*

FOR the books you have my best thanks. I used to think I was fond of fishing, but I find it a very dull business. If the good gentleman of Uz had been devoted to my present situation, and fixed among such a set of aquatic animals, his patience must have been exhausted.\* Sir, such a life as I

U

now

\* Doctor Franklin's opinion of angling, may be guessed at from the following story, which the sage often relates to those he thinks *bit* with a taste for *piscatory delights*. About six o'clock one summer morning, (said the philosopher) as I was riding by the side of a running brook in America, I observed a gentleman with his fishing rod in his hand, a basket, a bottle, and all the requisites, by his side. I asked him what sport?—I have

now lead, is fit for nothing but an otter, and I believe in my conscience the animals I am with are web footed, and have fins. They are neither fish nor flesh, "*A man knows not where to have them,*" but yet I cannot quit these *rods*, and *earth worms*, these ten days. Think what a treasure was your parcel.

With Miss Aikin's poems I am delighted, they abound in elegance and sublimity, and in harmony not inferior to  
Pope's

not been here more than two hours, was the answer.—— When I returned at the close of the day, the same gentle swain was in exactly the same place, and at the same employment. I stopped my horse, and asked him if he had been well amused? "*Exceeding well,*" was the reply. —Have you caught many fish?—"Not any sir."—Had many bites?—"No, not one bite, but I have had a most glorious *nibble*!!!

Pope's. Indeed, if opposed to the Essay on Man, *that* versification is much excelled.

Until the arrival of your's, all the print I could pick up in the house, from garret to wine-cellar, was *Bracken's Farriery*, *Hannah Glasses Cookery* (which by the way I very much like, for the *last* receipt in the book is for a *surfeit*) *Pomfret's Poems*, and *Pope's Essay on Man*; which last I have read through, and think it very inferior to his other ethic epistles. It is wonderful that a man of so exquisite a taste, so accurate an eye, and so delicate an ear, should have deformed his pages, with such abbreviations as *Chanc'lor*, *Gen'ral*, *Conqu'rors*, *Pow'rs*, *Flow'rs*, *Ev'ry*, *Heav'n*; I cannot see how his lines are shortened by them. *Heaven* will remain two syllables in any mode I can pronounce it, let it be spelled how you will. *Tb' eternal*, *Tb' apparent*, *T' inclose*; and

innumerable other examples might be quoted. The *philosophy* of the Essay I will not presume to meddle with, but the *poetry* is some of it very unworthy of Mr. Pope. Let us look at the first page.

“ The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore  
Of all who blindly creep, or *fightless* soar,  
Eye nature’s walks, shoot folly as it flies,  
And catch the *manners living* as they rise.”

Where a word ends with an *S*, a reader finds it unpleasant and difficult to begin the word following with the same serpentine letter. Would not *blindly soar*, have been equally poetical, and a better antithesis, than *fightless soar*. I should think *living manners* would have been quite as clear as *manners living*.—But this would be deemed high treason in the court of Parnassus, so “farewel it,” till we meet.

The

The translations I have returned by the coach. I made several attempts to read them, but all in vain. I could not for the soul of me get thro' three pages. That you may not reproach me with returning the books without an opinion, take the following four lines. I scribbled them in the marginal leaf of the first volume, but recollecting myself, thought it would be more modest to tear out the leaf, than let them remain in the front of the book, in my hand writing.

In holy church we see divines translated,  
 And mitres oft' times grace the *empty pated*.  
 How hard, how very hard's an author's fate,  
 When *empty pated* fellows will translate.

If you could get hold of Pontoppidan's Norway, or Pierre Vaude, or Philip Quarles, (I don't mean the Emblem merchant) I

would thank you ; though we are likely to do somewhat better now, for a good pleasant fellow joined our *partie* this morning. I walked with him into the church-yard, but there was nothing worth the trouble of an Epitaph hunter.—He has given me one though which pleases me. There is a good climax in it. Have you ever seen it ?

Dr. Greenwood, his Epitaph on his Wife.

Ah Death ! Ah Death ! thou hast cut down,  
 The fairest *Green wood* in all this town ;  
 Her virtues and her good qualities are such,  
 She was worthy to marry a lord or a judge,  
 Yet such was her condescension, and such her hum-  
     mility,  
 She chose to marry me, a Doctor in divinity,  
 For this heroic deed she stands confest,  
 Above all others the phoenix of her sex ;  
 And like that bird one young she did beget,  
 That she might not leave her sex disconsolate.  
 My grief for her loss is so very fore,  
 I can only write two lines more,

For

For this, and every other good woman's sake,  
Never let a blister be put on a lying-in woman's  
back.

This is a strange patched letter, part  
prose, part verse, and part neither. But  
whatever my letters are, believe that *I* am  
with the most profane sincerity.

Your's,

J. HENDERSON.

To Mr. I——.

Bath, Nov. 2, 1774.

AND so you have been in France. Prithee Jack tell me, is there that difference in the faces, habits, and characters, of these people, which *appeareth in the lively pourtraitures we see exhibited of them*; are their women either so beautiful, or so engaging as ours. I have not any great ambition to become either dominican, or capuchine, except that I might in either of those characters see a nun *en deshabille*.

I fancy my face would be deemed too *friar-like* already, to be admitted as a *lay-brother*, but that thin, fasting, formal face of thine, would be positively a letter of recommendation, and I think, my friend, you  
would



would give an attentive ear to the confessions of the young *devotees*, and, upon proper terms, grant them absolution. I wish I had been with you. I long to look at a novice;—but for a lady abbess—your description hath satisfied me.

What you say of the French officers agrees with all I have ever heard. They are gentlemen by birth and education. The superior carriage of the soldiers is owing to their being so universally taught fencing, an accomplishment so useful, so necessary, but in this country so much neglected. As tactics have never been my study, I do not feel any great desire to view their fortifications, notwithstanding the great things you say of them. Marlborough was certainly a fine fellow, and reward was proportioned to his merit; but had even *he* planted twice the number of cannon he had  
in

in France, against his own Blenheim, and employed *Monfieur Vauban* for his engineer, it would have stood the shock: so massy and ponderous is that huge heap of littleness, that I believe it will outlast the pyramids.

Can their churches exceed Westminster Abbey?—Those

“Storied windows, richly dight,  
“Casting a dim, religious light.”

impress me with a kind of awe I do not feel in any other place. If I were an absolute monarch, I would oblige such of my subjects as had a fancy for erecting churches, to build them of the Gothic order.

’Tis strange there should be only one good picture at St. Omer’s; but ’tis made up by plenty of *reliques*. I wish his Most Christian Majesty were visited by a dream of heaven  
and

and Mortimer—But when Salvator's Witch of Endor gives place to a Chinese painting, and that in the palace he inhabits!—what can we expect?

You say *Louis Quatorze* will never be forgotten, though he had left no other memorial than the roads, planted and terminated as they are; yet, to an Englishman, after ten of their *postes royales*, the prospect most devoutly to be wished is a good supper, which, it seems, you lacked. But though both H——s and you nauseated frogs, I dare say you relished Burgundy. Yet the juice of the grape, without some solids, would shrink a Falstaff to a Master Slender. After all, a capon and a cup of sack, are better than snails and Champagne. Such meagre fare and cold potations——“ I hate it.”

I am

I am now going to dine with a Jew : *his* will be a *Mosaic* treat. Fish, with oil instead of fauce, and a turkey stuffed with garlick was our last feast. *This* may, perhaps, be a boiled goose and pease-pudding, a stew of venison in four cyder, and a mutton-sausage pasty. I wish the worthies of old would have considered, before they made so many laws about eating, that though the tables of the law were very properly in their departments, the dining tables *seemed* more peculiarly in the province of the ladies. If prohibiting what is good be a sin, which I firmly believe it is, both Moses and Pythagoras have much to answer for. They banished beans and bacon between them, and that, let me tell you, is no bad dish when a man is hungry, in spite of *their philosophy*.

I suppose the women are returned, heavy laden with the labours of the loom and the  
spoils

spoils of the nunnery, and, I hope, escaped the Custom-house inspectors. Farewel: if you, or your *cara sposa*, will return me as much, and as complete nonsense as I have written, I will acknowledge that you have not travelled in vain, nor surveyed strange countries for nought.

Your's, ever,

J. H.

To

To Mr. I——.

*Bath, October 10th.*

I B E G your excuse for my silence, but I have such a multitude of business upon my mind, that it takes away my power, and abates much of my inclination to write.

You must not be offended at this, because it contains no disrespect or abatement of the sincere and just affection I have for you.—Make my compliments and thanks to Mrs. —— for the waistcoat, which is ten times more admired than I am, and the girls will run the length of the parade, to see my flower'd and gilt belly, who would not quit their own threshold to see me. Foote is down here, and I have talked to  
him

him a good deal, and dined at a gentleman's where he was, Garrick wrote a letter to Mr. Taylor the other day, which I saw, and he speaks very handsomely of me. — I play away here in the old way; I played one new character last week, (Pierre) and am preparing with all my might and main for twelve more at least. Doctor Dodd is here, and I have dined with him too. Desire Mrs. ——— to believe I love her, and to leave off abusing me as she used to do, and do you think me unalterably,

Your's,

J. HENDERSON.

To

To Mr. I——

*Bath, 2d May.*

THANKS, thanks, thanks for your care about my mother—you make me very easy by telling me you interest yourself for her——I cannot write long letters nor good ones now, so you must be content with friendly ones.

It is now one of the first wishes of my heart that \*——\* may swing, for whoever injures my dear friend \*——\* shall have all the bitterness of my soul attend him.—Why or wherefore is no matter.—If I had interest with the devil, (which by the bye I believe I never shall have) I would beg a double portion of remorse and internal torment for that rascal.

To



To Mr. I——.

*Birmingham, July 8, 1776.*

MY DEAR I——,

IT is very strange to me, that my mother should not have received my letters. I wrote to her the day before I set out for this place. I told her of my design to pass my summer here—However, on the receipt of your's, I have again written to her. If that letter also should miscarry, pray, my dear friend, tell her that it invited her to live with me at Bath. It told her, that I would procure her an apartment in the same house with me if I could; if not, I will provide her with a lodging near me: but I rather think and hope, that we may live together. I shall be there the latter end of September. There is nothing in my power which I

X

would

would not do, to make that excellent woman happy—She and you Jack, have but one fault, and that is, too great a partiality for a very filly fellow—But be that as it may, I shall be uneasy 'till I have her with me. As to yourself, my worthy friend, I scarce know what to say; my heart longs to talk with you, but its sensations are so simple, and so boyish, I know not how to write them. I love your peace, your happiness, and would I could promote it: I love \*——\* too; pray tell her so: tell her that no one on earth, except thyself, my friend, can have a better sense of her deserving, or a truer affection for her.

Adieu,

J. HENDERSON.

To Mr. I——.

*Birmingham, July 26, 1776.*

DEAR I——,

I HAVE received a letter from my mother, which I have really had no time to answer, and now I know not where she is. Perhaps you do, for she tells me she should go to London. She objects to coming to Bath, on account of the weight of her baggage, and the expence of its carriage; but that is nothing. Pray tell her, Jack, that I shall be two seasons more at Bath, by articles, and I had rather have her with me, than that she should be liable to inconveniences elsewhere. I find that she has been very ill treated in the country, and my heart aches to think of it; for if there ever was unaffected and genuine simplicity,

and innocence of heart, it is in my mother. I shall not be at ease if I have her not with me; for I not only feel a sense of duty, but a lively and tender affection for her—I know her peculiarities, and can indulge them better than any other person, and I think it will give her happiness to see and know my manner of living, &c. Do, my dearest friend, tell her what I say, and if she wants money let her have it, and I will send you a draft for it without delay.

Believe me,

Your's, &c.

J. H.

To

To Mr. I——.

*Birmingham, Aug. 31, 1776.*

DEAR I——,

I HAVE had letters from my mother, who will be with me at Bath—She will go through London, and if she calls on you, which I desired her to do, I know your friendship will supply her with any money she may want, and I will remit it to you.

Mrs. Yates is here at present, and we played *The Wonder* last night. You cannot imagine how I am carressed by all ranks of people. I shall leave this place covered with Birmingham laurels.

I play with Mrs. Yates again on Monday, *The Roman Father*, and most probably

Shylock afterwards. Things are ripening for me ; I am not sorry, even now, that I did not come to London. The end will show I shall do very well—I am, in the mean time, as happy as I have any notion of being. I wish we could have a day or two together ; but for that we must wait.

Farewell,

J. HENDERSON,

To Mr. I——,

*Bath, October 12, 1776.*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \*. I am very ill at this writing, and have been so this week ; but it will go away, or Doctor Schomberg and I, with a reinforcement of apothecaries, will drive it away—I hope you and \*——\* are in health ; there is no one's health dearer to me,

Did I tell you that I have got my mother here, and am combating with her legion of gloomy blue D——s too ; but I ought to do it, and that is enough for me.

Adieu,

To the Reverend Mr. D——

*Bath, Feb, 17th, 1776.*

DEAR DOCTOR,

I SCARCE know how to begin a letter, I long to write to you; I have many times been about to address you, and though I never wanted, nor ever shall want a subject, if I were to write all that my heart feels towards you; yet after a certain time has elapsed in silence, one knows not how to resume the same familiarity, and with the same spirit, as if no chasm had been made in our correspondence; at least I feel it so.— I should hardly have had courage now if Mr. ——— had not told me you thought it unkind in me to be silent—I would do almost any thing to remove such an opinion from  
from



from your mind, for I love and honour you with sincere attachment, and respect.  
 “ Something too much of this.”

I shall not wonder if you join with all my friends in town, to condemn my staying here in preference to being in London, because I hear the business has been very partially explained, but I think if it were fairly and fully disclosed to you, I should rather have your approbation. I am naturally timorous, and have an instinctive reluctance to engage in bustle, contention, and intrigue. I have no talents for them, and therefore think it would not be prudent to quit the moderate and quiet path I am in, for such hazardous pursuits. I will tell you, my most dear friend, the simple principle on which I acted, and I think it almost an *axiom*. If I am really wanted on the London stage, I ought to be placed there  
 on

on honourable and advantageous terms, and I should be so. If I am *not* really wanted, I have no business there, nor can the design of having me there be other than treacherous and pernicious, Yet farther. It was only proposed to engage me for one year; a proposal by which the manager hazarded nothing, as the very novelty of one who had been talked of as I had been, would have paid in very few nights the salary I was to receive; and I hazarded *everything* by it.

My friend W———\* tells me he has thoughts of taking orders, a view which I am persuaded you will encourage, and promote, as he certainly has not, any more than myself, talents for business and chicane; I was very sensibly touched with his misfortunes, and think the church is the only asylum he can meet with from  
 them

them. But you will judge better than I can.

I hope, my dear friend, you have health, and that is all I need with to such a heart, and such a capacity as yours ; felicity and honour will naturally follow such goodness, and such understanding, if their operations are not retarded by sickness.

Believe me, &c.

J. HENDERSON.

*Inscribed under the Picture of a Lady who  
had slighted the Author.*

(Written in 1769.)

ONWARD it presses with an eager view,  
More splendid scenes, and transports to pursue ;  
Far as ambition's piercing eye can see,  
Nor once regards humility and me.  
No gentle blandishments arrest its speed,  
Nor once it stops, though love and meekness bleed,  
Bleed in its path, and tremble in its course,  
Weak ties have love, against ambition's force.

By pleasure urg'd—urg'd by ambition's sting,  
From love, from me, from tenderness you spring.  
Your picture, faithful to your heart as face,  
Eludes my grasp, and mocks my fond embrace.  
No more from solemn thought to mirth I fly,  
No more the heart exults, no more the eye  
Darting abroad, collects each scattered ray,  
Which humour beam'd, and fancy led astray.

*Inscribed*

*Inscribed under a Print of Orpheus playing  
on his Lyre, being the Frontispiece to a  
young Lady's Music Book.*

( Written in 1768. )

WHEN Orpheus sung, or sweetly touch'd his lyre,  
Such heav'n born sounds the woods and groves inspire ;  
The rugged rocks, and wood-clad mountains dance,  
And wild with pleasure, at his song advance ;  
Such melody stern Pluto's soul disarms,  
From Pluto's throne Eurydice it charms.  
At length by cruel hands bereav'd of breath,  
(For music's self cannot contend with death)  
The shepherds all their rural sports forsook,  
And every eye assum'd a mournful look,  
Each nymph felt anguish—grief felt ev'ry swain,  
In place of harmony, see discord reign.  
Long in this state men liv'd, and had remain'd  
So now——But you, my fair, have deign'd  
To sooth our cares, and soften all our grief,  
And brought sweet melody to our relief.

So soft the sounds, of grace and ease possess,  
 Such airs melifluous humanize each breast,  
 No longer need you envy Orpheus' fame,  
 Since a new Orpheus reigns in \*———'s name.

*A Receipt to make a Pastoral:*

TAKE first two handfuls of wild thyme,  
 Or any herb that suits your rhyme,  
 And shred it finely o'er your plains,  
 Fit to receive your rolling swains.  
 With crocus, violets, and daisies,  
 Be sure to fill the vacant places;  
 Then plant your groves and myrtle bowers,  
 (Well water'd with celestial showers)  
 And, to avoid the critics quarrel,  
 A sprig or two of Virgil's laurel.  
 Your ground thus laid, your trees thus plac'd,  
 Sweeten'd with flow'rs to your taste,  
 Your shepherd take, and as is wont,  
 Baptize him at the poet's font.  
 Adorn him with scrip, crook, and reed,  
 And lay him by for farther need.

Then

Then take a damsel neat and fair,  
 And in a fillet bind her hair,  
 Give her a flock of tender sheep,  
 And keep her by you—She will keep.

*An Imitation of a French Pastoral*

I

DAPHNIS one day his flock had led  
 Into a verdant grove :  
 Not far off, Phillis in the shade,  
 Had brought her lambs to rove :  
 Both of them met each other,  
 Her Daphnis saw,  
 Him Phillis saw,  
 Each of them saw the other.

II.

Good day, sweet shepherdeſs, ſaid he;  
 Shepherd ſaid ſhe good day;  
 In yonder orchard prithee ſee,  
 The graſs how freſh and gay ;

Both

Both instantly went thither ;  
 Daphnis sat down,  
 Phillis sat down,  
 They both sat down together.

## III.

A nosegay then of violets made,  
 For Phillis the shepherd pull'd,  
 Phillis for him, in order laid  
 Some flowers nicely cull'd,  
 Both offer'd them each other ;  
*Her's*, Daphnis took,  
*His*, Phillis took,  
 Each took them of the other.

## IV.

Permit, upon thy breast, he cry'd,  
 That I this nosegay place,  
 With mine the pretty lass replied,  
 I'd fain thy bosom grace.  
 Both granted one another ;  
 His, Daphnis plac'd,  
 Her's, Phillis plac'd,  
 Each plac'd them on the other.



## V.

To ever true and constant be,  
 Make me, said he, a vow,  
 To constant be, and true, said she,  
 The same to me do thou;  
 Both promis'd one another.  
 This Daphnis did,  
 This Phillis did,  
 They did so by each other.

Y

The

The following little Fragment he wrote soon after his arrival at Bath. There is, I think, a sort of whimsical humour about it, somewhat resembling the *Historie* which Mr. Henderson read into reputation : but as neither John Gilpin's Race, nor Mr. Henderson's very *outré* manner of reading it, ever gave me any very extatic pleasure, I think some apology necessary to the reader, for inserting an imperfect Ballad.

*A New Ballad.*

YE lords and lordlings lend an ear,  
 No wicked lies I write,  
 The truth most truly you shall hear,  
 For your ease and delight.

In Bath a wine-merchant did dwell,  
 And C——y was his name,  
 Who by the blessing of the muse,  
 I now transmit to fame.

This

This wine-merchant a daughter had,  
 A daughter brown had he,  
 Who when she wore both cap and shoes,  
 Reach'd to her father's knee.

When other misses drest their dolls,  
 She drest her mind, I ween,  
 And when her play-mates made dirt pies,  
 She at her book was seen.

Full broad the ribband which she wore,  
 To bind her head around,  
 And right fantastic were the shoes,  
 Which kept her from the ground.

And now, when time had form'd her ear,  
 To music she it bent,  
 And pleas'd the neighboring gentles all,  
 And all folks where she went.

Her father grew exceeding proud,  
 Exceeding proud grew he,  
 And ask'd the gentles all around,  
 His daughter for to see.

Hoping, that some of noble birth,  
 Would be caught by a song,  
 And careless of her low estate,  
 In wedlock bind her strong.

The gentles star'd, and knew not what  
 To do, or what to say;  
 They wip'd their faces as they could,  
 They bow'd, and came away.

Now see how pride destroyeth all  
 The knowledge God hath sent,  
 Sith he who serv'd full many a man,  
 Could harbour such intent.

For once, before his heart grew proud,  
 A livery he wore,  
 And us'd to wait with hat in hand,  
 His master to the door.

So well he did in this behave,  
 So humble then did seem,  
 That no one thought of pride or state,  
 This merchant e'er could dream.

The nobles, therefore, notic'd him,  
 And bought his wine, to shew  
 That merit they would patronize,  
 Though sprung from ne'er so low.

Yet all this while no lordling came,  
 With offer of his hand,  
 Nor squireling spruce, nor parson trim,  
 With cassock and with band.

What shall I do, the father cry'd,  
 My daughter will grow old,  
 And all her wit, and all her voice,  
 Will serve her but to scold.

Then to the synagogue went he,  
 And brought out many a Jew,  
 To hear her play, and hear her sing,  
 And of her take a view.

From Pontus, and from Phrygia,  
 From Cappadocia eke,  
 These wandering pilgrims came I ween,  
 Two or three times a week.

They fat, they heard, and took their snuff,  
 And wondering, roll'd their eyes,  
 And then protested,—that without  
 Some wine they could not rise.

Then Franco thin, and Cappa fat,  
 Declar'd upon their word,  
 They thought her for a Jew too good,  
 And bid her wed a lord.

But now comes on a dreadful tale,  
 I tremble to relate,  
 Oh, that some lord, or bishop had,  
 Torn out this leaf of fate.

To Bath there came a strange young man,  
 Nobody knew from whence ;  
 Presuming on some foolish gifts,  
 Of talent and of sense.

Unto the playhouse straight he went,  
 The manager to see,  
 Who gave immediately consent,  
 A player he should be.

The day was fixt, the day was come,  
 That he should first appear,  
 When lo in Hamlet as he stood,  
 He shook his hat with fear.

This damsel saw, this damsel sigh'd,  
 And bath'd her jetty eyes,  
 And said, my heart is near breaking,  
 For Hamlet when he dies,

The father storm'd, and lock'd his doors,  
 This player to prevent,  
 Swore, like Ophelia, she should drown,  
 Before he'd give consent.

But say what bolts or bars, can keep  
 A woman from her will ;  
 'Tis more than mortal man can do,

\* \* \* \* \*

*Cætera desunt.*

## E P I G R A M

*On Artaxerxes, and other Operas, performed at the Theatres.*

OUR English stage, which was at first design'd,  
To raise the genius, and improve the mind,  
To expose the various follies of the town;  
Seems *now* contented to expose *its own*,

*The Blighted Wreath.*

VIVID and green, the laurel Roscius wore,  
Still water'd with the fostering dew of praise,  
'Till vanity and avarice swore,  
To have a pluck at his long-envied bays.

They waited on him—welcome guests they were,  
And artful, took possession of his heart;

Then strove to blast, the wreath they could not tear,  
With venom foul, infus'd by specious art.

Most



Most natural magic, and dire property,  
 Alas, too plainly to the world were seen,  
 On wholesome fame usurp'd immediately,  
 And sickly yellow gain'd upon the green.

Almost, each night, some leaf its verdure lost,  
 Yet they his weak and cred'lous heart consol'd ;  
 They bade him prize his laurel by its cost,  
 When ev'ry leaf should be transform'd to gold.

Pernicious alchemy ! ah, treacherous friends,  
 How could you, nature's darling thus deceive ;  
 That you have compass'd your infidious ends,  
 The soul of Shakespear, and the muse shall grieve.

Ah, what avails it, that on Thames's shore,  
 Three hundred thousand pounds his banker keeps,  
 Whilst Phœbus and the Muses all deplore,  
 His avarice waking, whilst his genius sleeps.

These pounds, indeed, will many a flatterer buy ;  
 But ah ! where then are brother George's hopes ;  
 These pounds, were doom'd his children to supply,  
 Not pay for scribbling *metaphors* and *tropes*.

*An Impromptu on Mr. GARRICK'S  
Funeral.*

AS from the borders of Cocytus' wave,  
Not yet enfranchis'd by the closing grave,  
Garrick just peep'd into the world above,  
And saw a sombrous long procession move ;  
Saw the strand glitter with the tawdry state,  
Part grave, part gay, part tinsel, and part plate ;  
The prim deportment of lugubrious mutes,  
And the taught tossings of the feather'd brutes,

“ Another jubilee, he cried, appears,  
“ Go bid the managers dismiss their fears ;  
“ No more from empty theatres despair,  
“ And dread of duns, deliver to the air !  
“ Call all my carpenters—bid George attend,  
“ And ransack Monmouth-street from end to end ;  
“ Buy all the blacks, defraud the starving moth,  
“ Or let him, if he will, defile the cloth :  
“ Bring moth and all—we have no time to lose—  
“ If there's not black enough, then buy the blues.

“ Dye

“ Dye all the truncheons, and their edges gild,  
 “ All but that truncheon I was wont to wield ;  
 “ Buy from the pastry-cooks their twelfth-night flags,  
 “ To flame in front, the rear be cloth’d with rags ;  
 “ The dirtiest wardrobe will the rear supply,  
 “ Our stage perspective will deceive the eye :  
 “ All to your several offices repair,  
 “ Whilst I determine—in what place or where,  
 “ This gaudy mummary may best appear.  
 “ If for Ophelia, by young Hamlet mourn’d ;  
 “ Or for poor Juliet, yet alive inurn’d.”

}

Thus far he spoke, in an imperial tone,  
 And quite forgot the funeral was his own.

Alas, poor Garrick, in Elysian meads,  
 Where new delight to new delight succeeds ;  
 Still shall the phantom wealth thy steps pursue,  
 And tinge thy pleasures with a *careful* hue.

The two foregoing Jeu d'Esprits I several  
 years ago submitted to the inspection of my  
 friend, Mr. Mickle, whose translation of  
 the

the *Lusiad* will remain a monument of his poetic talents, while this country retains taste for luxuriant imagery, adorned with harmonious numbers—He thought that they contained much wit, but more severity, and hoped that Mr. Garrick's various powers as an actor, and generosity as a friend, would be held in remembrance, when his little foibles, as a man, were forgotten ; and that it was rather unfair to lash *his* memory for the gaudy mummerly of a funeral, originating in the folly and ridiculous vanity of surviving friends. “ I will show you (said he) what is my opinion of Mr. Garrick,” and gave me the following lines.

*Upon*

*Upon Mr. GARRICK.*

BY MR. MICKLE.

FAIR was the graceful form Prometheus made,  
 Its front, the image of the God displayed:  
 All heaven approved it, e'er Minerva stole  
 The fire of Jove, and kindled up the soul.

So Shakespeare's page, the flower of poesy,  
 E'er Garrick rose, had charms for every eye;  
 'Twas nature's genuine image, wild and grand,  
 The strong marked picture of a master's hand.

But when *his* Garrick—Shakespeare's Pallas came,  
 The Bard's bold painting burst into a flame:  
 Each part, new force and vital warmth received,  
 As touched by heaven—and all the picture lived.

F I N I S.



# E R R A T A.

Page.	Line.		
15	2	<i>read</i> circumstances— <i>for</i> circumstance.	
22	3	thy	thine.
42	8	he	it.
45	7, and 8—	should not be divided, but the same paragraph continued.	
91	12	<i>read</i> hands——— <i>for</i> stands.	
105	18	witches	wishes.
125	3	wit	wits.
138	2	Dec. 22, 1774	Oct. 24, 1772.
196	7	manner in which he—	manner he.
196	8	justified	satisfied.
218	2	1778	1780.
224	4	unwillingly	unwilling.
290	11	are not inferior	not inferior:
294	12	were	are.













AUG 19 1983

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